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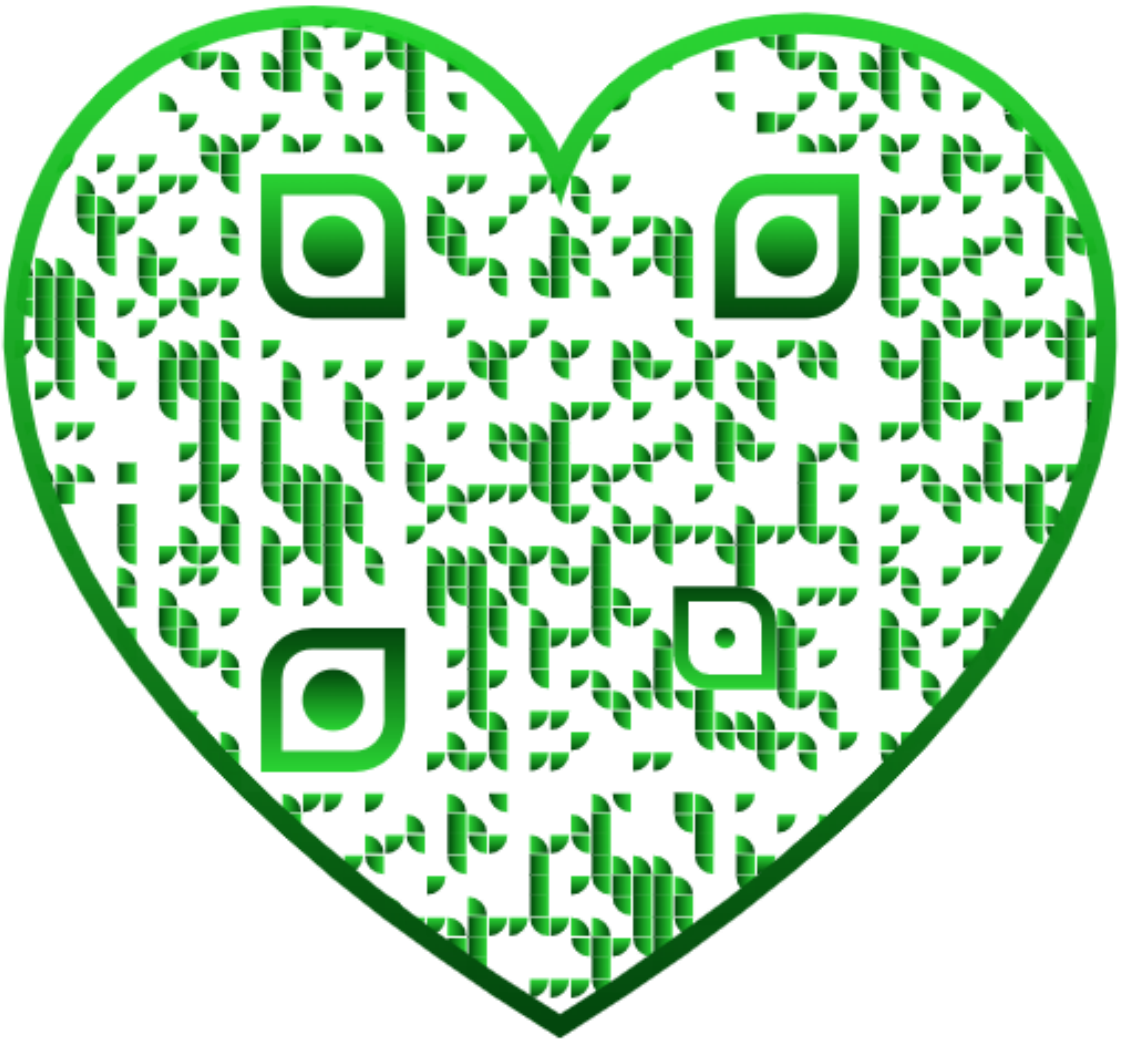

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Welcome...

As far as rock music goes, I feel like 2023 is set to be one of the best summers in years. In the live arena, Metallica performed a barnstorming two-nighter at Download Festival, the Arctic Monkeys delivered a huge nationwide run of stadium shows, while shock-rock icons Kiss played on UK soil for the final time on their *End Of The Road* farewell tour. And all this rock 'n' roll goodness is a mere backdrop for a slew of great album releases...

Back in June, Foo Fighters, Avenged Sevenfold and Queens Of The Stone Age dropped new records – and we break all three of 'em down for you in our track by track features. July sees the latest offerings from Greta Van Fleet and Nita Strauss – both of whom talk us through their new musical directions.

In August we're due new material from the band fronted by the man you see on this month's cover, Wolfgang Van Halen. I was lucky enough to hear *Mammoth II* a few months back. It's a more focused release than the band's debut – a contemporary-sounding hard rock record from beginning to end that sees Wolfgang, though describing himself as a "songwriter first and foremost", taking his soloing to new heights. Turn to p30 to read Wolf's thoughts on writing solos as if they're songs, the melodic influence of David Gilmour, two-handed tapping and recording with his late father's iconic Frankenstein guitar.

Elsewhere in the mag you'll find a review of the latest Hammett Gibson Greeny Les Paul, lessons for songs by RHCP, QOTSA and Kiss, plus, once again on the Van Halen theme, you can win an EVH Wolfgang WG Standard QM.

Enjoy the issue and I'll see you next time!

Chris Bird Editor

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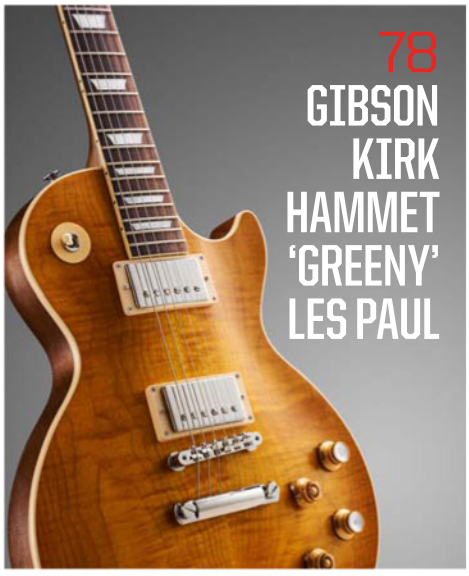

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Words Stanley Bull **Photo** Ross Halfin

WHIPLASH!

June 2023 saw San Francisco thrash titans Metallica return to UK shores for the first time since 2019, with not one but *two* headline sets at metalhead mecca Download Festival. Over 100,000 fans made the pilgrimage to the hallowed grounds of Donington Park to celebrate the festival's 20th anniversary, which began nine years after the iconic Monsters of Rock ended in 1996.

Metallica adhered to a strict 'no repeats' rule across their two performances, treating fans to an onslaught of material that included career-best highlights *Master Of Puppets*, *Enter Sandman*, *Seek & Destroy*, *One* and *Sad But True*, as well as choice cuts *Battery*, *Ride The Lightning*, *Whiplash*, *Fuel*, and a number of tracks from the band's latest album, *72 Seasons*.

Guitarists James Hetfield and Kirk Hammett were on stellar form, riffing and soloing like men three times their junior. Hetfield chugged away across the two nights on his infamous white Flying V copy and his signature Ken Lawrence Explorer, whilst Hammett displayed his lead chops on his signature ESP Mummy and Gibson 'Greeny' Les Paul. For a band well into their fifth decade, Metallica sounded as well-oiled and awesome as ever.

Elsewhere across the weekend, Sheffield's Bring Me The Horizon ascended to the prestigious Friday night headline set, before previous four-time headliners Slipknot closed out the Sunday with a heavy dose of nu-metal mayhem. They were joined on the bill by heavyweights Ghost, Behemoth, Architects and Disturbed, alongside rising stars Lorna Shore, Nova Twins, Soul Glo and many more. Happy anniversary, Download. Here's to the next 20 years!

BAR
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SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS

ALBUM

"IT SOUNDS LIKE A CYBORG HUNGOVER AND VOMITING!"

INSIDE THE 'SONIC CRAZINESS' OF PUNK-METAL PROJECT **MUTOID MAN**

Consisting of members of Cave In, Converge and High On Fire, the punk-meets-metal beast that is Mutoid Man has awakened from a six year slumber to offer up the riff-packed, tonally adventurous third album *Mutants*, released on July 28. Guitarist/vocalist Stephen Brodsky tells TG what they're aiming for: "The more robotic, futuristic and mind-melty, the better!"

Do Mutoid Man songs always start with a riff?

Being such a guitar-driven band, riffs are a prime weapon in our songwriting arsenal. If I just feel like playing guitar and I get that urge, I go into this mindless zone of what my fingers feel like doing. If it feels exciting, I roll with it! Usually, a vocal comes out of that.

Talk us through that killer *Call Of The Void* riff...

The riff itself is a fairly simple hammer-on thing near the 12th fret. The song is tuned to drop A# – basically the same tuning as Soundgarden's *Rusty Cage* or Tool's *Prison Sex*. The sonic craziness is what Chris Maggio – our former fill-in drummer – likes to call "the funny pedals", which are basically a couple of Boss Super Shifters. One is set to bend an octave upwards and the other is set to either a full octave or two octaves down. It functions like a DigiTech Whammy, but instead of the seesaw pedal, it's two boxes I can jump between. On the main riff, it's primarily me using the upward one to get that scrambled sonic thing that sounds like a cyborg hungover and vomiting after a night of partying!

What are your other pedal essentials?

For years, I've gravitated towards the Boss OS-2. Throw that in the mix with a Marshall JCM800 and you've got the classic Slayer tone. It's so immediate and it's been a staple of mine for years. In addition, a large part of the Mutoid Man sound is the DigiTech Synth Wah. There's a setting that has this very laser-like octave tone that drops everything down. You can hear it in *Call Of The Void*'s bridge.

Over the years, you've championed an Aria Pro II Michael Schenker Signature V, but is it still your number one?

I do still actively use that. Believe it or not, a lot of the last Cave In record was written with that thing! It's super reliable and built for speed. But, truth be told, most of the stuff on the album was performed with a Strat that belongs to Kurt [Ballou] from Converge, who engineered and produced everything. It took me a minute but I really came around to the Strat, and what you hear on the record is essentially a single guitar track. We did some tricks to make it feel like it was expanding or changing tone in fun ways using room mics or plugins.

Mutants is littered with scorching pinched harmonics. Any tips for really making them squeal?

Every guitar is different and it really seems like placement is a big part of where you get pinch harmonics; the smallest movements can really make a difference. Jeff Matz, our new bassist, turned me onto the Tortex Flow picks and those are great. They're a bit shorter and most of my finger covers the pick. It makes those pinchy-squealies a lot easier to fly out of the fingers!

Ellie Rogers

Photo Axe Ireland

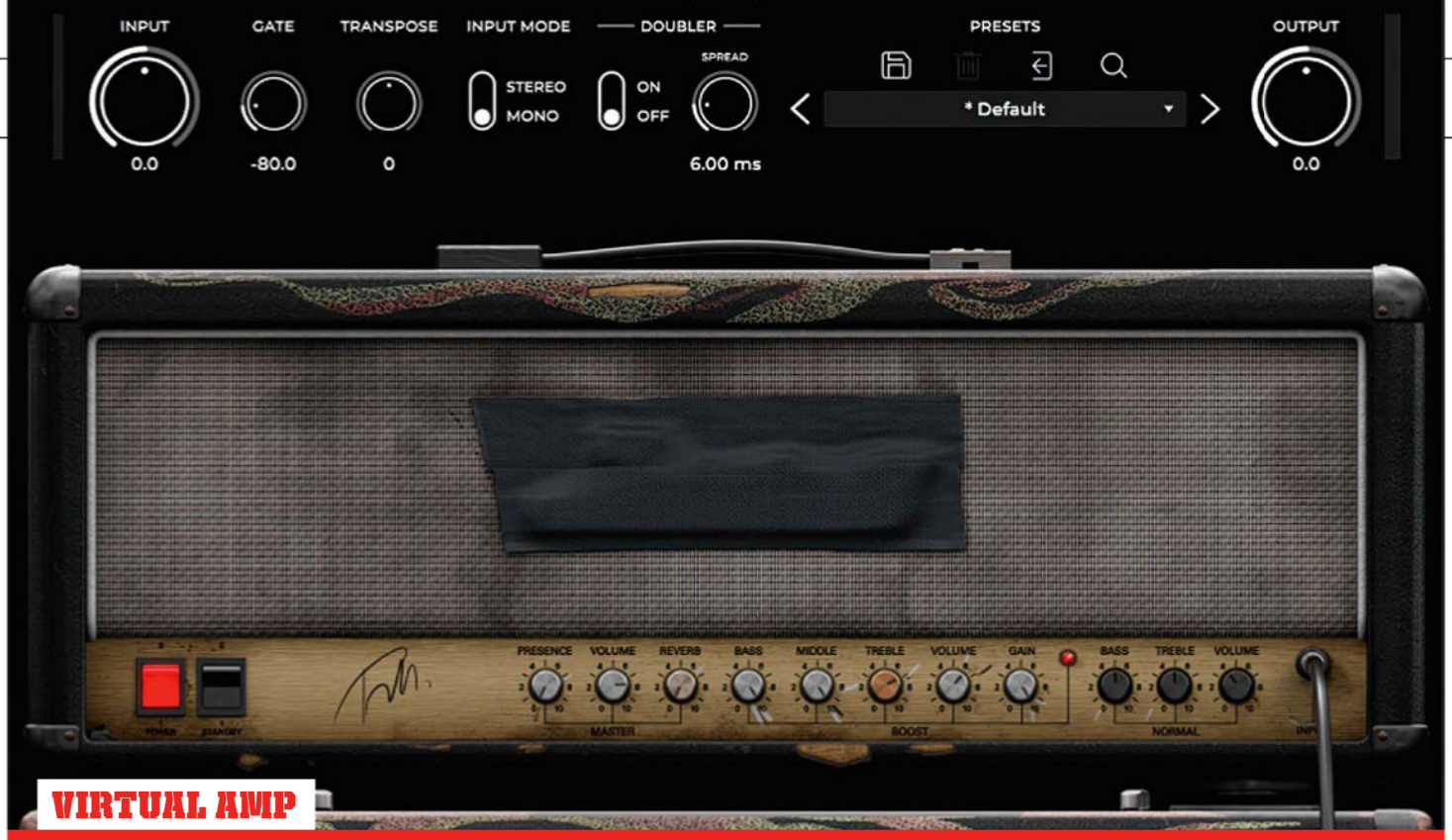
GUITAR

MIJ SERIES EVH SIGNATURE WOLFGANG

Words Chris Bird, Stuart Williams

RUNNIN' WITH THE NEW WOLFGANG MODEL

We all know Eddie Van Halen's legacy as one of the greatest guitarists of all time. You're probably aware too of the EVH brand he set up with Fender in 2007, now under the watchful eye of Eddie's son and this month's cover star, Wolfgang Van Halen. The latest offering from the brand is this Signature Wolfgang electric guitar, the company's newest addition to the MIJ series. Crafted in Japan, the model's basswood body features a big leaf maple arched top and five-ply binding, and is paired with a graphite-reinforced bolt-on quartersawn maple neck and 12"-16" compound radius ebony fingerboard with rolled edges and 22 stainless-steel frets. It's stacked with Eddie's preferred touring specs, too. Tone comes via a custom-wound EVH Wolfgang Alnico 2 humbucker in the bridge and an alnico 3 custom-wound EVH Wolfgang humbucker in the neck, both controlled by a reverse-oriented three-way toggle switch. The top-mount Floyd Rose should make divebombs a breeze, and it comes with EVH's patented EVH D-Tuna for instant retuning to drop D. You'll also find a low-friction knob that, we're told, creates even tapering for smooth volume swells, while mutes can be performed with the lower bout kill switch. Sold with a hardshell case, leather strap and dog leash strap/eye-bolt brass clasps included, the MIJ Wolfgang is available in Stealth and Ivory finishes and retails for £1999.



VIRTUAL AMP

NEURAL DSP ARCHETYPE: MORELLO

It's the rig we never thought would become 'signature', but now, digital modelling wizard Neural DSP has got hold of Rage Against The Machine guitarist Tom Morello's rig and made it available as a plugin. Included in Archetype: Tom Morello is every part of the inventive guitarist's signal chain, from Tom's Whammy pedal (there are two of those), the JCM-800 head which has formed the backbone of his tone throughout his career, plus his EQ, phaser and delay pedals, and multiple IRs of Tom's Peavey cabinet. It runs as a plugin or in standalone mode, so you could potentially gig using the software direct to a PA, and it's available now priced at €119.

GUITAR

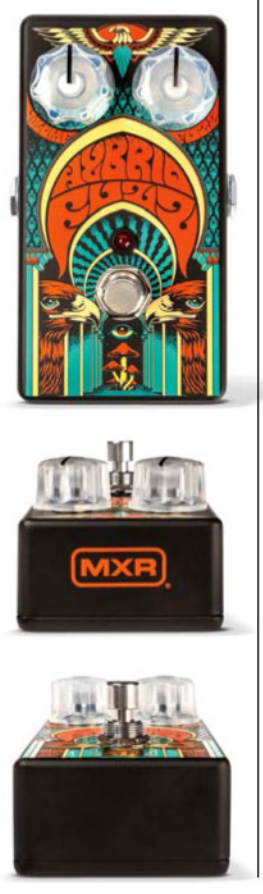
SQUIER PARANORMAL SERIES

No, it's not Halloween yet, but Squier is bringing us more Paranormal activity with its Paranormal Series, designed to take Fender traditions into the 'Upside Down'. There are four electrics: the Custom Nashville Stratocaster, an Esquire Deluxe (a 70s take on the single-pickup Tele forebear), the Jazzmaster XII (which gives us a surf-tastic 12-string offset with a headstock the size of a longboard), and the Strat-O-Sonic, which is how we'd imagine a Strat would be had Fender been founded in Kalamazoo. Here the iconic doublecut is fitted with a 24.75" scale length, twin soapbars and wrap-around bridge. They start at £409 and will be shipping by the time you read this.

PEDAL

MXR HYBRID FUZZ

When it comes to fuzz pedals – and more specifically, MXR's legendary Fuzz Face – there's a perpetual decision to be made: germanium or silicone? Many vintage tonesmiths will insist that germanium diodes win thanks to their smooth, warm clipping, while silicone is the beardy, aggro choice for modern fuzz enthusiasts. Well, now you don't have to choose as MXR has released the Hybrid Fuzz, which contains both flavours in one pedal. Its controls are simple, with Fuzz (gain) and Volume (er, volume) controls, and it comes adorned with a trippy paint job too.



Words Stuart Williams **Photography** Olly Curtis

DOUBLE PLATINUM

Gretsch marks 140 years with some tasty-looking anniversary guitars

Gretsch is celebrating its 140th anniversary in 2023, and to mark the occasion it's released a new collection of guitars, all presented in stunning Two-Tone finishes.

Normally, special edition anniversary guitars set our alarm bells ringing as we watch the prices soar, but alongside three Japanese-made models, Gretsch has made a trio of more affordable Electromatics including the solidbody G5230T-140 Jet (£649), and G5622T-140 doublecut, semi-hollow model (£849). Pictured is the G5420T-140 hollowbody (£949), which comes in Two-Tone Pearl Platinum/Stone Platinum. It features a laminated maple body, maple neck and laurel fingerboard, and is fitted with a pair of FT-5E Filter'Tron humbuckers as well as a Bigsby B60.

The anniversary gets a nod from the finish, which is highlighted by the Stone Platinum scratchplate and pickup bezels (and continued on the back of the guitar), while the headstock is adorned with a 140th Anniversary plaque.

140th anniversary

Not many guitar companies can boast about having been in business for as long as this, and Gretsch has chosen three models to create Electromatic Anniversary guitars.

Gretsch appointments

With the all-important Bigsby and a pair of Filter'Tron humbuckers, this hollowbody delivers the Gretsch brief on a budget.

Two-Tone finish

The Two-Tone finish is understated and classy, and that Platinum Stone colour covers the back of the guitar.

THE FX FACTOR

ESSENTIAL EFFECTS FOR YOUR PEDALBOARD

1 Bypass footswitch
On or off. Simple! This is a true bypass feature on DigiTech's Whammy 5.

2 Interval selector
Sets the intervals for harmonising and pitch shifting.

3 Treadle
Rock the treadle to sweep between your chosen intervals. Obviously!

4 Mode switch
Generally, play single notes in Classic mode or use Chords mode for a full polyphonic spree.

PITCH SHIFTERS

How the DigiTech Whammy altered a generation

Before the DigiTech Whammy came out in 1989, pitch shifting and harmonisation was the preserve of expensive rack units targeted at pro users. The Whammy changed all that, with a crunchy pitch shifter and Swiss Army knife harmoniser offered at a consumer price point. An explosion of creativity followed as experimental and mainstream guitarists alike found fresh applications for the Whammy. Simple and intuitive, the sounds available from the Ferrari-red box ranged from simple octave harmonising to elastic, stratospheric pitch shifts. Countless guitarists and bassists have used it, all in different ways. Justin Chancellor, Matt Bellamy, Tom Morello, Johnny Greenwood, Steve Vai and Jack White are some of the iconic players who have left their mark with its help. Simply put, the Whammy is possibly the most expressive pedal since the wah. Arguably nothing released since has the same pure expressive power. Still think the Whammy is a niche effect? Well, it's worth remembering that any treadle-equipped multi-fx will include a dynamic pitch shifter within its menu banks – and that's largely thanks to DigiTech's original.

SIMPLY PUT, THE WHAMMY IS POSSIBLY THE MOST EXPRESSIVE PEDAL SINCE THE WAH...

MUST TRY...

Build your 'board with these 'best in class' alternatives, available now

GAMECHANGER AUDIO BIGSBY

£339

The Gamechanger is a polyphonic small-interval shifter that models the Bigsby trem. The goal isn't acrobatic shifting, but instead a more organic tremolo arm feel. Chief among the benefits versus a real Bigsby is more precision and confidence. Without the potential for going out of tune, you can dig into a bend, or incorporate several shifts into a riff.

ELECTRO-HARMONIX PITCH FORK

£189

The Pitch Fork is a direct competitor to the Whammy, with a wider three-octave range and a handy blend control. However, the main reason it has gained popularity is its impressive tracking. It can be controlled with an expression pedal, but that does of course mean abandoning the compactness.

DIGITECH WHAMMY RICOCHET

£139

Perhaps in response to the Pitch Fork, DigiTech released this streamlined Whammy, which is a steal in many European countries. Like the Boss Harmonist pedals, it has ballistic controls, meaning you can control the speed it ramps up to, and down from, the target note. You can also reverse its function by shifting pitch, and then switching the mode.

SOUND ADVICE

Follow our bespoke settings to dial in three classic tones

SHIFT +1 OCTAVE

MODE CLASSIC

FURIOUS MUSE

Early in Muse's career, guitarist Matt Bellamy experimented extensively live with rhythmic use of the Whammy. *Fury* perhaps represents the peak of his mastery of the unit, with double-time rhythmic sweeps during the first two repeats of the riff before accenting specific sustained notes on the third time through.

SHIFT +2 OCTAVE

MODE CLASSIC

ADEBISI SHANK BITCRUSH

Adebisi Shank's aggressive yet playful math-rock-style influenced countless bands, from Alpha Male Tea Party to And So I Watch You From Afar. Aside from many theatrical uses of pitch shifting in their tracks, they also have moments like *World In Harmony* where chords are played through the Whammy, resulting in bit-crushed chaos.

DROP D TUNE

MODE CLASSIC OR CHORDS

THAT SWERVING FEELING

On record, the legato glide that occurs in the main riff of Swervedriver's *Never Lose That Feeling* was likely frontman Adam Franklin's Jazzmaster tremolo arm. However, for post-reformation live shows, guitarist Jimmy Hartridge, who favours a Les Paul, tended to play that figure, leaning on the lean mean red machine to emulate the detune effect.

FIVE WAYS TO...

USE MINOR 7 ARPEGGIOS

Your riffs, rhythm parts, and solos can all benefit from an arpeggio injection

An arpeggio is the notes of a chord played one at a time. On guitar, arpeggios have a reputation for being used mainly in jazz and shred solos. While they are great tools for advanced soloing, they are useful in every style of guitar. Classic riffs like The Killers' *Mr Brightside*, Aerosmith's *Same Old Song And Dance*, and REM's *Everybody Hurts* are built around arpeggios. In fact, there's so much you can do with them that for this lesson we're only looking at one type of arpeggio: the minor 7. You may hear about techniques like sweep picking, string skipping, economy picking, or tapping for arpeggios. They're cool, but you don't need them here.

The notes in a minor 7 arpeggio are the first, third, fifth and seventh notes from a natural minor scale – giving the intervals: root, ♭3rd, 5th, ♭7th. You might notice that's similar to the minor pentatonic scale (root, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th). You can think of a minor 7 arpeggio as a minor pentatonic scale with the perfect 4th left out. And because you probably already know at least one pentatonic shape, it's easy to find convenient minor 7 shapes.

You might think reducing the number of notes you can play is a strange way to make your lead playing more interesting, but soloing with a minor 7 arpeggio sounds surprisingly different from the pentatonic. Your ear is used to hearing that 4th note, and you'll notice its absence. Switching between minor 7 and pentatonic ideas can add variety to solos.

Arpeggios are also great for rhythm parts, either on their own or as a second part while another guitar plays chords. The same idea can work in completely different genres depending on what tone you use: a clean, jangly tone can really enhance an indie track, while using palm muting and gain could make the same part work in a rock or metal song.

1 WRITE RIFFS WITH MINOR 7 CHORDS

bit.ly/tg373audio

The similarity of the minor 7 arpeggio to the minor pentatonic scale makes it great for all the situations where you could use the pentatonic but want something slightly different. Here's one way you could play a heavy riff using only the minor 7.

Words, guitars and backing Jenna Scaramanga

2 USE THEM IN BLUES LICKS

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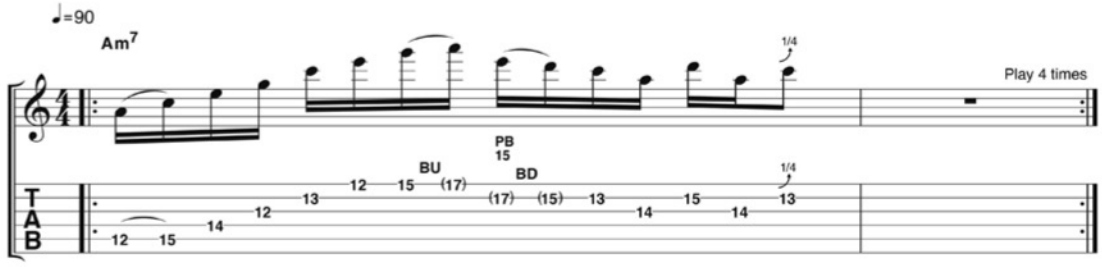

A simple place to start is playing an ascending arpeggio as an approach to a pentatonic blues lick. This example plays a two-octave arpeggio for the first two beats and then shifts into shape four of the minor pentatonic scale.

3 MINOR 7TH OPEN-STRING JANGLE

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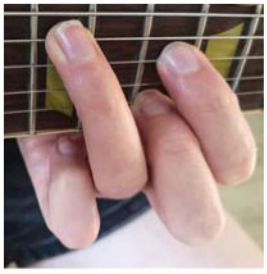

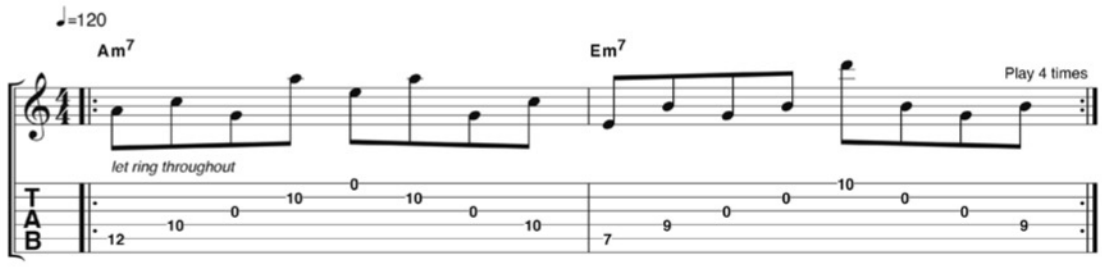

Mixing fretted and open notes is very effective. The notes in Am7 are A-C-E-G, so you have three open strings available in standard tuning; Em7 (E-G-B-D) gives you five possibilities. For other keys, try different tunings or a capo.

4 MAKE SIMPLE CHORDS SOUND CLEVER

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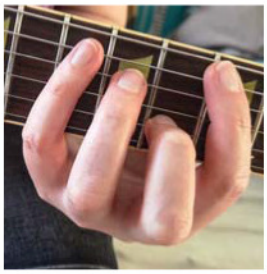

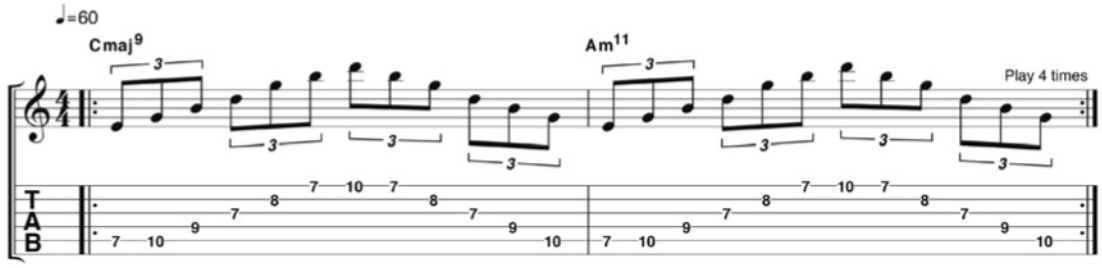

Theory time: Cmaj9 has the notes C-E-G-B-D, and Am11 is A-C-E-G-B-D, so they each contain *all* the notes of an Em7 chord. If the band plays a simple C major (C-E-G) or Am (A-C-E), adding Em7 over the top will give the sound of these beautiful extended chords.

5 ADD COLOUR TO POWERCHORDS

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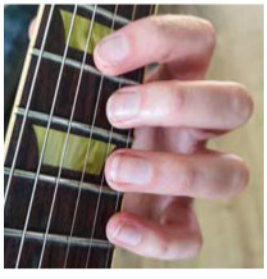
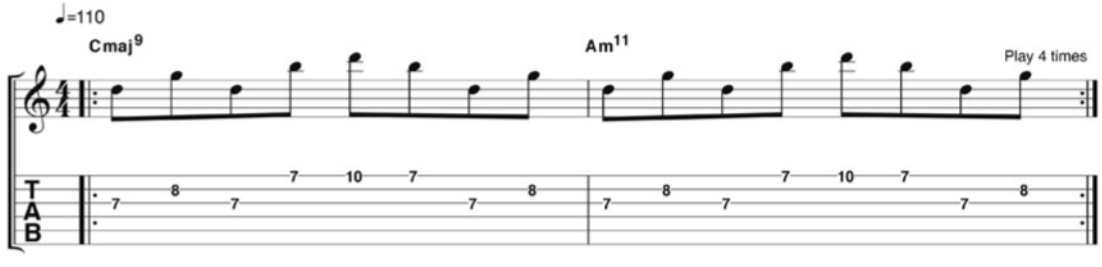




Here's how the concept from example 4 could work in context: the backing plays basic C5 and A5 powerchords. By playing a melody with the notes of Em7 over the top, you create the effect of Cmaj9 and Am11.

Words Stan Bull **Photos** Alex Kurunis

"WE'VE MADE THESE SONGS QUITE HARD TO PLAY LIVE!"

For the two guitarists in experimental post-punk band **Squid**, normal rules do not apply. As they put it: **"We've never wanted to come across like we're doing things properly!"**

Squid are one of the UK's most forward-thinking guitar groups, but when their guitar-playing multi-instrumentalist Louis Borlase talks about his earliest influences, a surprising name comes up. "I was obsessed with Bryan Adams for a while," Louis says. "In school I performed *Run To You* in front of the year group, which is probably my musical highlight to date."

TG's self-depreciation detector is sounding, but Louis' modesty is welcome nevertheless. In the last couple of years, he and his bandmates – fellow guitarist Anton Pearson, singer/drummer Ollie Judge, keyboardist Arthur Leadbetter and bassist Laurie Nankivell – have made the ascension from niche club venues like Brixton's Windmill to outdoor festival stages such as Glastonbury. As Anton describes the band's early days: "Our first show was at The Verdict, a jazz venue in Brighton. We booked that show and then had to write music to fill the set. I don't think we would have felt comfortable doing that for a 'normal' gig venue."

This avant-garde approach clearly worked, as Squid's love of Talking Heads-style art rock, krautrock, ambient electronics, odd time signatures and brass instruments landed them on famed dance label Warp Records for their debut album *Bright Green Field* – not bad for a band who seemed to suffer from a tinge of imposter syndrome in their early days. As Louis recalls: "When we first started playing gigs, we'd be looking at other groups like, 'They look like a proper band. They're playing their instruments like a proper band'. But one thing that's been quite explicit is the fact that we've never really wanted to come across like we're doing things properly – to know what 'properly' would mean!"

Speaking from the Warp Records HQ in London, Louis and Anton are discussing their expansive new album *O Monolith*, recorded in Peter Gabriel's serene Real World Studios in Wiltshire…

You started writing songs for *O Monolith* during gigs after *Bright Green Field*. Did they come about from jamming in front of a live audience, or was it something that was written in parts and taken to gigs to flesh out?

Anton: We had a tour called Fieldworks, which was a kind of socially-distanced tour, and all we were allowed to do at the time. We used that as an opportunity to play some unfinished material. It's not often that we're writing things while the gig is happening, but it helps solidify ideas, so then you have the confidence to take it to another stage when you're next in the rehearsal room. I don't want us to seem like some kind of mad geniuses that just get on stage and write something and then it's done. That's not what we are!

Louis: Some of the songs were a bit clunky for quite a long time. But one thing that was nice about Fieldworks was that we had quite a few tracks that made it all the way through, and we recorded some of them, including *Undergrowth* and *Swing (In A Dream)*. Those were instrumental tracks for quite a long time. So it was nice after having released *Bright Green Field* in 2021 as a finished piece of work, that we had these sketchy instrumentals for quite some time.

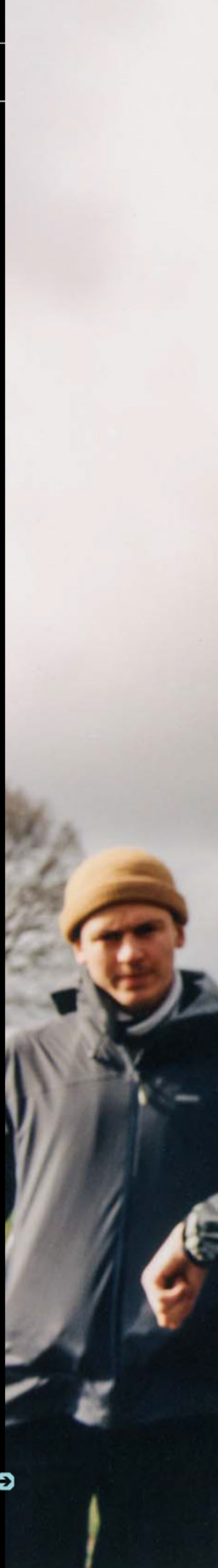
How much did the songs change from those initial performances to when they were finally recorded?

Anton: Most of them pretty massively, to be honest. For a lot of them, it felt like they became songs that were going to go somewhere for the first time on that tour.

Louis: Some of them were finishing right up until the end, as well. Which is quite funny, because we had this amazing, state of the art studio, and we were like, 'Today's the day, we really need to try and finish that track – we need to record it!'

Do you think the songs will continue to change and mutate on stage as you keep playing them? Or are you set on a final version of them now?

Louis: I think they'll change a lot. Some of them are quite hard to play – not that they're virtuosically difficult. But I was thinking about how the vocals came a bit later on, we kind of built up these layers of possibility of what we could do. And then, when it's finally finished and recorded, and some of them are in compound time signatures where Ollie is singing and drumming as well, it's like, 'We've made these songs quite hard for ourselves to play live'. So I think there will be some fun ways to push ourselves into trying different types of arrangements – stripped-back arrangements; electronic ones as well. But we haven't got that far yet.



"OUR MUSIC NATURALLY LENDS ITSELF TO EXPLORATIVE IMPROVISATION"

LOUIS BORLASE

Does working with synths change how you approach the guitar?
Louis: I do think that since playing more keyboards in Squid that I've found myself just enjoying the guitar as a clean instrument more, and focusing on using different tunings and just letting the guitar speak for itself. I think for us as a band, texture is massively important as an approach to songwriting. Particular sounds are as important as a melody.

You guys have been known to swap instruments on stage. Does this stem from who played what on the record?
Anton: We record everything as a full-band live take, So usually, whoever's playing something on stage has done that on the record.
Louis: We still haven't got to the stage where we have a two-bass tune yet. We've always got two basses on stage; a right- and a left-handed one. I think we once found ourselves jamming with two basses on stage in Copenhagen. But we haven't managed to then take that idea into a focused writing environment and make the two-bass tune.

Like the Spinal Tap song *Big Bottom*, where three of them are playing basses at the same time...
Anton: You shouldn't let Spinal Tap stifle your creativity.
Louis: We should be allowed our two-bass moment!

We look forward to hearing that. Neither of you play traditional 'rhythm' or 'lead'. How do you know when to sit back to not get in each other's way?
Louis: Because our music doesn't have a verse-chorus focus, it naturally lends itself to a kind of explorative improvisation across quite a linear structure. I think any musician finds it a challenge to find that balance of when to play versus when not to play. And I think when it comes to writing, we've gotten better over the years of being able to kind of just write counterparts. *O Monolith* is definitely a development on that from *Bright Green Field*, because we didn't want it to be so much an album that was built around all sounds happening at once. Instead, we wanted it to be a bit more individual melodies that interlock.

"YOU SHOULDN'T LET SPINAL TAP STIFLE YOUR CREATIVITY!"
ANTON PEARSON

ABOVE
Guitarists Louis Borlase (top) and Anton Pearson (insert)

The album boasts both delicate, melodic playing and really fuzzed-out moments. *Swing (In A Dream)* has an almost-stoner metal riff halfway through, and there's blown-out distortion on *The Blades* as well.
Louis: We recorded the album with Dan Carey, and he's a very fun person to work with. I think he does just collect lots of amps and he has lots of different distortions that he always brings out each time. He'll go, 'I know this is the right one for this tune!' The [InterFax] Harmonic Percolator fuzz came out quite a lot. And then he'd just bought a Magnatone 1x12 combo, and that was really nice because no matter how hard you push it stays very soft-sounding as well. So I think doing the album with him, we liked to have a bit of fun trying out different guitar sounds, but it's kind of just how the song goes. If there's a loud moment, I think we do find ourselves saying let's get nice and energetic and grungy. But I'd say 90% of the time everything's still kind of clean. I don't think we're a 'leave the overdrive pedal on' kind of band.

What gear did you use to track the record?
Anton: I used a few different guitars. Most of it I did on Dan's 1970s Strat, and I used a Rickenbacker 360. I've got a WEM Westminster [amp], and I don't know the model, but I used that alongside a Swart amp. That was a nice blend of really bright and warm sounds.
Louis: I think I tracked most of it on my Jazzmaster, and I think *Undergrowth* and *Devil's Den* and possibly *Green Light* – that was all on my Telecaster, and amp-wise, all Dan's amps. Mostly on the Magnatone 1x12 and his tweed 1970s Mesa/Boogie, which I tend to use every time we work with him. And then like lots of the fuzzier moments were on his Supro, as well.

You started writing *O Monolith* so long ago. Are you already thinking about the next thing?
Anton: We're always writing.
Louis: We've got to tell everyone in our team that we're really focused on *O Monolith*, because that's the only thing that matters to us right now as we're halfway through the album campaign. But deep down we're like, 'These new tracks are sounding amazing!'
***O Monolith* is out now.**

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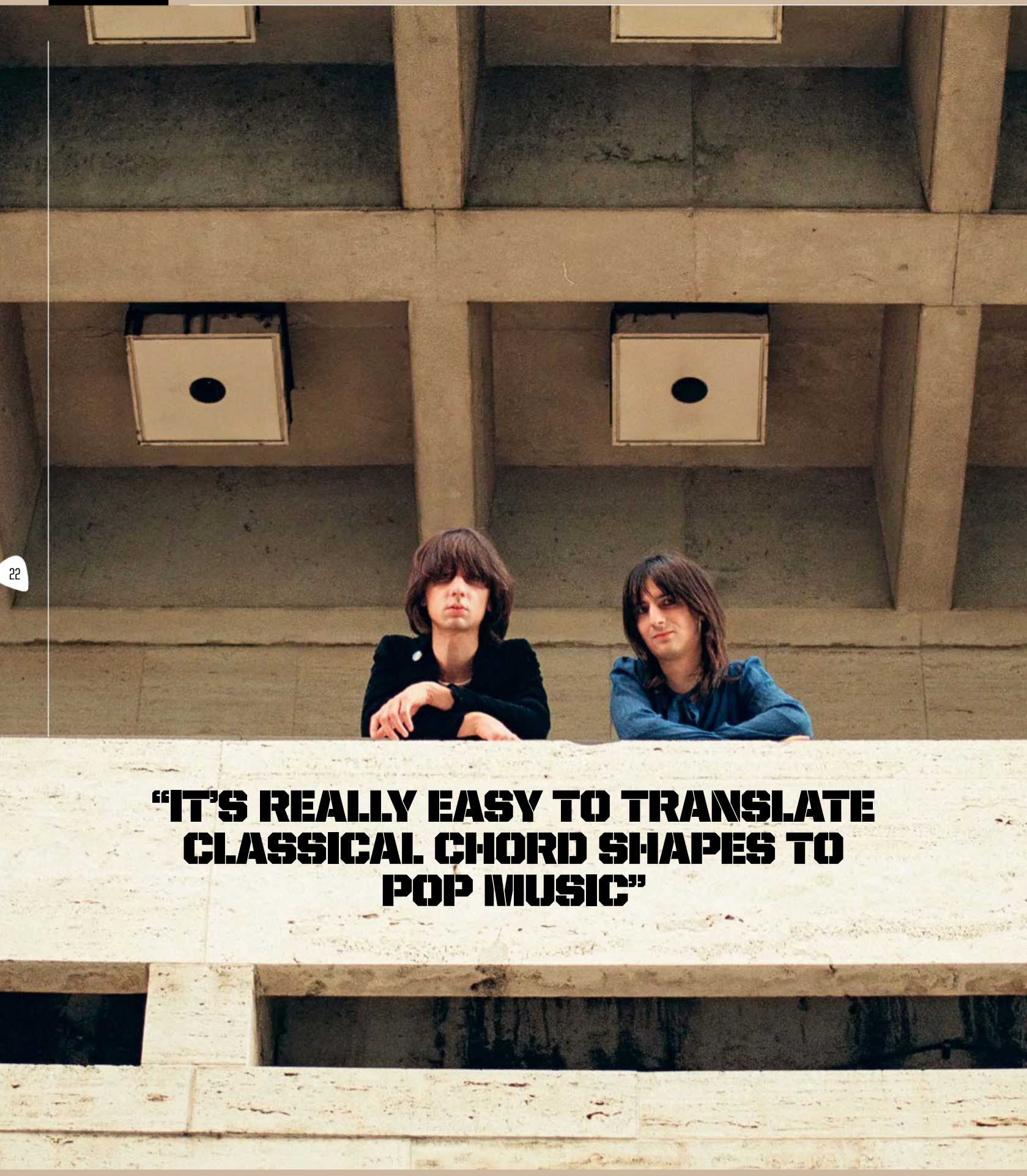


"IT'S REALLY EASY TO TRANSLATE CLASSICAL CHORD SHAPES TO POP MUSIC"

Words Stan Bull

"THE STRAT SOUND IS THE MOST INSPIRING"

The Lemon Twigs' power-pop has a new sense of refinement – plus some classic guitar heroics

They could be considered the vanguard of a 70s glam rock revival, but TG's favourite New York brother-band The Lemon Twigs are exploring a more contemplative and stripped-back sound on their fourth full-length, *Everything Harmony*. Full of rich vocal harmonies and subtle fingerpicked guitar lines, the band's bold change of pace has resulted in some of their finest work to date.

"The sound came during the demoing process," says Brian D'Addario, who shares vocal, guitar, bass, drum and production duties with his brother Michael. "The songs that stood out were the songs that were more vulnerable. That was a mood that we got into that continued until the whole album was written. We wrote a lot of frivolous pop at the time as well, which we love, but it just felt wrong to put them alongside the other songs."

The brothers' quest to refine their sound found them taking in a wider range of influences than ever before, including the late cellist and composer Arthur Russell, and his 2019 compilation album *Iowa Dream*. "We played that to death," says Brian. "A lot of those recordings were made in a demo form, and you just get a sense of his completely unique identity as a songwriter and a melodist, and that's what we wanted to capture on our record – what our identities are as writers, not just an audition reel of all these different styles we're interested in."

Speaking from his apartment in Brooklyn, Brian discusses his appreciation for classical guitar, his newfound love of Rickenbacker 12-strings and his formative years as a surprise My Chemical Romance super-fan…

You're from a musical family. What age did you start playing the guitar?
I was around seven, and I remember The Beatles' *Love Me Do* was the first thing my dad taught me – which uses these one-finger chords – probably on a very small nylon-string guitar. I think I started writing songs around that time, with one-finger chords.

Did seeing instruments around the house make you want to learn how to play them?
Yeah. I'd get real frustrated not knowing how to play instruments, so my dad would just show me a few things here and there. It was something that Michael and I took to intensely.

Do you remember the first guitar you owned?
I got this Johnson tiny-scale – I'm not even sure what you'd call it, but it was meant for kids – higher-tuned Strat copy. That was the first guitar that was my own; it was perfect for my size.

Did Michael and yourself begin performing together right from the start?
We started with me playing guitar and Michael playing drums – we were always playing together. We always knew that it was going to be us in a band together. Over the years, I think we both flirted with doing stuff on our own, but it's never been something that we thought would be as good or as enjoyable to do.

Did you ever use to fight over who was in the spotlight?
I think as soon as Michael started playing guitar and writing his own songs I was happy to give up some of the spotlight to him. But it was always the kind of thing where people would watch him from the drums and he would sing songs from the drums. So as soon as I got a chance to play drums on stage, I really took to that because that was something I wasn't allowed to do when I was a kid. My mum would say, 'Well, Michael's the drummer.' So I was happy to start sharing different roles.

You posted a video on social media of your teenage band covering My Chemical Romance back in 2010. What's the story there?
That was shot in our parents' backyard. There was a cover contest that MCR did on their website, and we entered about three or four different covers. When we played with them last year it was really cool to see them, and the songs were still very strong. When we first got into other music we kind of turned our backs on that whole genre, but you get a real sense of the songs and how good they are when you see them live.

Who were your guitar heroes growing up?
Well, Ray Toro [of MCR] was a big hero when I was learning to play stuff, and he did things technically that I learned note-for-note that really helped me play fast. But my initial guitar heroes were Pete Townshend, Jimi Hendrix, George Harrison; people like that. And when I discovered Tom Verlaine, that was a whole new way of approaching a solo. Robbie Robertson was also a big one, and Richard Thompson had incredible style.

Many of the tracks on *Everything Harmony* feature acoustic fingerpicking. Was this something you had to brush up on or was it already in your wheelhouse?
It's how I write on guitar, generally – I play the melody first before I start singing. There weren't a lot of fingerpicking parts that were written after the fact. I played classical guitar for a while, and so when I play classical it helps me brush up on all the other stuff that I play. I would definitely advise people to try classical because you get introduced to all these different chord shapes, even in the simplest pieces that you'll learn. So it's really easy to translate classical chord shapes to pop music.

***Every Day Is The Worst Day Of My Life* is probably the most stripped-back you've sounded.**
That was Michael's tune. As soon as he made the demo he was like, 'This is the version', and I was pushing us to re-record it with drums and stuff. But when we were tracking it again it didn't feel right, especially doing the vocals again. It's always really hard to recapture that feeling you get when you record a song for the first time and you're super excited about it. So we just left it, and I'm really happy with it.

What guitars were you using for the acoustic parts?
There's this classical guitar that I got in LA at a shop and it was made by the store owner's grandfather, and there was a Gurian, which was my brother's. We saw Paul Simon play one; they're made by New York-based luthier Michael Gurian.

What about for the electric guitars?
There was a Rickenbacker 12-string that we used, a '77 black Strat and a knock-off Hofner bass that belonged to the engineer, and we mainly used natural distortion from a Fender Twin Reverb.

You're known to play Fenders and Gibsons. What is it about these classic brands that you love so much? The sound, the aesthetic?
Oh, both. We're getting more into playing 12-string now. There's a Gretsch 12-string that we like a lot, and the Rickenbacker 12-string. But the Strat sound mainly has been the most inspiring sound to work with for us. I guess it's sort of power-pop lineage, [The Beatles' 1965 classic] *Nowhere Man* being the first guitar sound that I really locked into. It's always inspiring to come up with a part on a Strat.

The track *What You Were Doing* features a great solo towards the end.
That was an improvised solo, done thinking that we were gonna fade the song out way earlier. It was really spontaneous, I was just fooling around and that's probably why it came out sounding free. It's pretty Television-inspired. The first half is the first take and the second half is the last take.

SIMPLY THE ZEST
Brian D'Addario, above: "When I discovered Tom Verlaine, that was a whole new way of approaching a solo."

Photos Getty

Another highlight is *Ghost Run Free*. What are we hearing in the outro?
Everything was recorded with this TC Electronic chorus pedal that we loved, and then after we did some real flanging by taking the whole track and putting it into our Roland Space Echo and messing with the speed. We did that a few times and we used our Eventide H3000 that has some digital phasing and flanging effects, and we put the whole track through that a couple times and tried to find some nice, sweeping sounds that we could do some stereo effects with. That was pretty inspired by a particular Roxy Music song, *In Every Dream Home A Heartache* [from 1973's *For Your Pleasure*], where the whole end of the song is this really epic, totally phased-out thing.

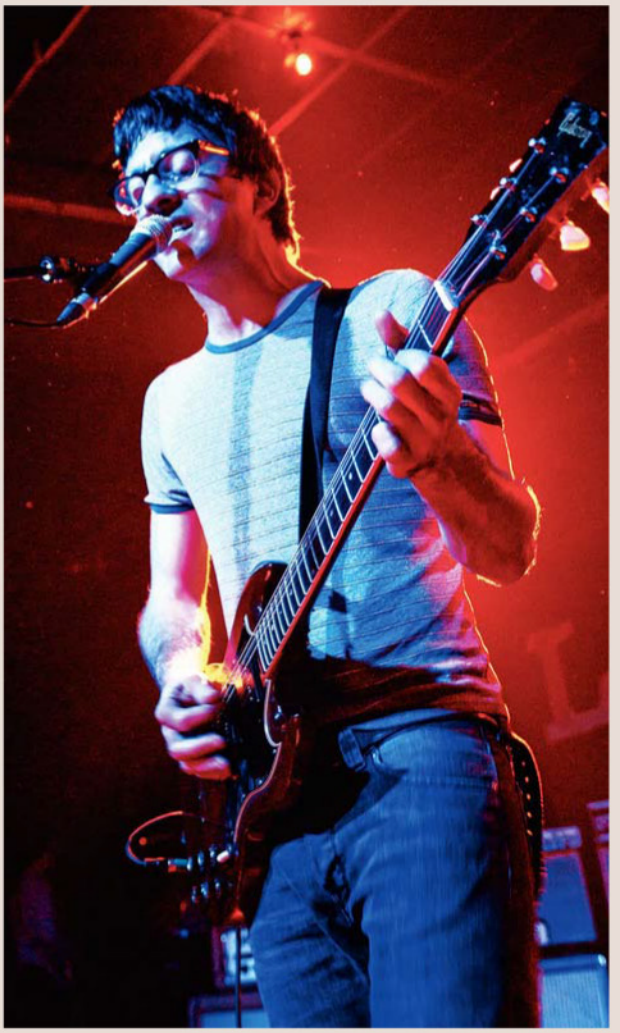
As multi-instrumentalists, do you ever think, 'this song just flat-out doesn't need a guitar'?
Definitely. The most important thing is how you initially track the song. We'll always track with Michael on drums and me on guitar, or vice versa, and we'll try to get something that we keep. We don't record a guide track. Whatever is supposed to be most prominent in the song is what we'll record first, so I'll try to get a good guitar arrangement that I want people to pay attention to when we're initially tracking. That way, everything else that's paired with it is working around that instrument.

Finally, are there any holy grail items of gear you're still after?
Just Rickenbackers, I think. Different kinds of Ricks. Michael, I know, especially wants the Roger McGuinn blonde Rick, but a six-string version. And I would say the same!
***Everything Harmony* is out now.**

Guitars and backing Steve Allsworth **Photos** Getty

WRITE A BRITPOP-STYLE HIT!

A genre as much about songwriting as solid guitar playing: here, we crack open a bottle of Britpop-inspired traits for you to try!

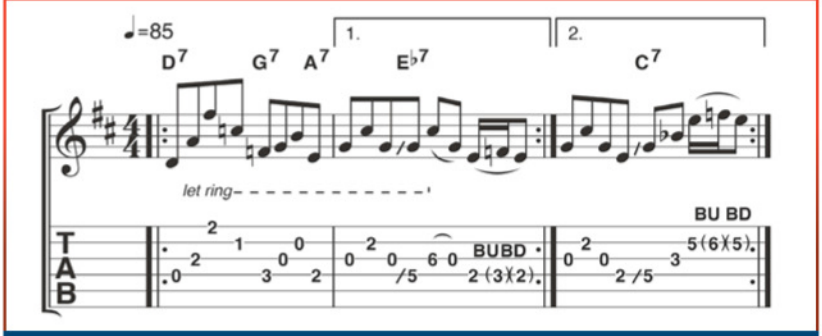


With a new Blur album imminent and the 'will they, won't they?' chatter about an Oasis reunion seemingly never-ending, what better time to take a look at the songwriting secrets of 90s Britpop and Brit-rock? It was a movement chock-full of great guitar players, and here we analyse the techniques and tricks of some the best.

It turns out 90s British guitar music is a real mix of styles. Check out the shoegaze of Ride's Andy Bell, the G n' R-style influences of the Manic Street Preachers, the grungey loud/soft sensibilities of Ash, the angular, experimental sounds of Blur and Radiohead – and that's before we've even mentioned Oasis, Suede, The Charlatans, The Stone Roses, or any others…

Perhaps it goes without saying that it's near impossible to make gear recommendations for this musically-broad genre. Most Fender and Gibson guitars were used by the big bands. If we had a long shopping list we'd buy Gibson a Les Paul Standard and an ES-335, a Fender Telecaster and a Jaguar, plus a Rickenbacker 330/360-12 for trademark jangle tones. Amp-wise it's open season depending on which side of the high-gain/low-gain/clean-jangle fences you sit on. Like we say, it's a broad style and you can make your tone your own.

1 TASTY ARPEGGIOS bit.ly/tg373audio



Britpop tracks such as Suede's *So Young* and Sleeper's *Delicious* use arpeggio-based riffs with a melodic slant. We've added bends to our arps.

GIRL FROM WAHS

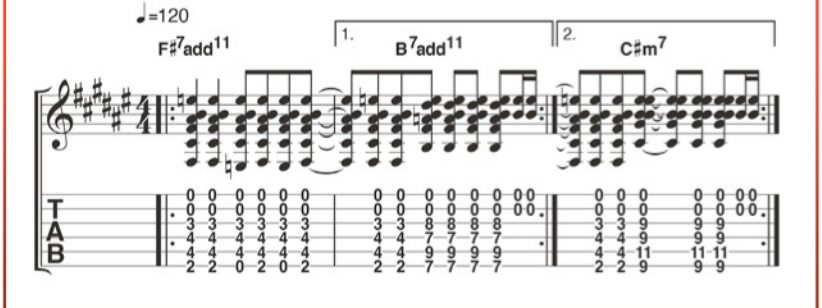
The wah pedal isn't reserved for funk and classic rock noodling. In fact, it appeared on many a Britpop anthem. Tim Wheeler, Steve Cradock and even Noel Gallagher kicked the treadle to the metal to liven up their solos. *Shaft*-style wacka-chucka mutes are perhaps less

DIAL IN A JANGLE TONE

The influence of indie heroes The Smiths and The La's runs deep in Britpop, and clean chorus-y jangle tones can be heard in tracks such as *Slight Return* by The Bluetones, *Going For Gold* by Shed Seven and *Live The Dream* by Cast.

John Power of The La's in his Tele-toting Cast days

2 MADCHESTER VIBES bit.ly/tg373audio



Britpop is a direct descendent of the Madchester baggy scene. Droning open strings and funky wah rhythms give you the vibe.

WRITE FOR TWO GUITARISTS

Most of Britpop's big hitters were two-guitar bands. Lone-guitar acts such as Suede layered parts up in the studio and shared the load on tour. Ocean Colour Scene frontman Simon Fowler rode shotgun to Steve Cradock's lead. Sure, there are exceptions, but the rich mixes of the genre benefit from two guitars.

Ocean Colour Scene, typically of Britpop bands, had two guitarists

COWBOYS FROM HULL

Fortunes were made and spoils were enjoyed off the back of simple cowboy chords during the Britpop era. Don't be afraid to make friends with simple open chords! A big-bodied acoustic guitar is a key ingredient of many of Britpop's biggest ballads. *Wonderwall* and *The Drugs Don't Work* certainly wouldn't have sounded the same without them.

3 STAR SPANGLED HAMMER-ONS

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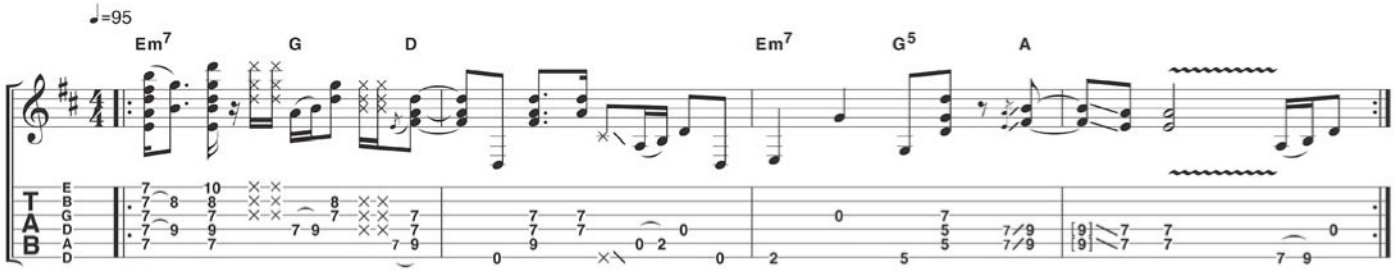

From Reef and Shed Seven to Blur and The Lightning Seeds, the influence of Jimi Hendrix is far-reaching throughout Britpop's short history. Try using hammered-on shapes, partial chords, inversions, melodic breaks and diads to add a bit of flair to simple chord progressions.

4 JUST BURN UP THE NECK, BABY

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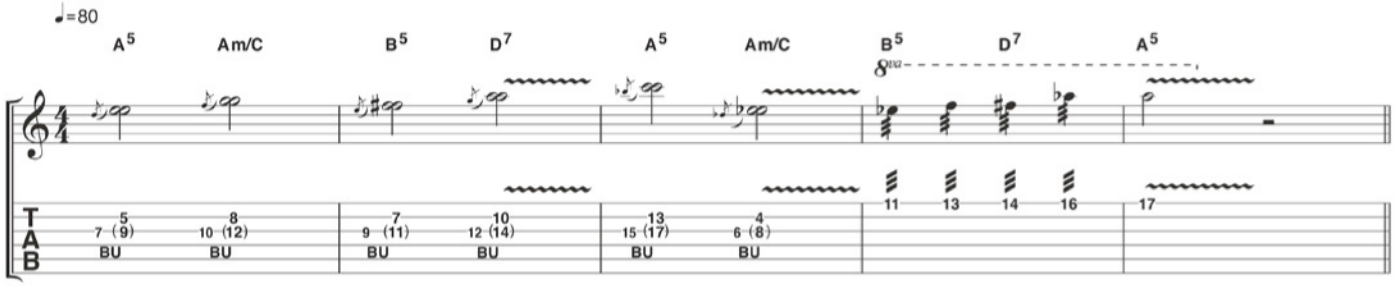

Ash and Radiohead took a left-field approach to soloing, with dissonance and rapid tremolo picking featuring in tracks like *Burn Baby Burn* and *Just*. Another throwback to Jimi Hendrix, maybe? Draw out the unison bends in bars 1 to 3 to really milk their clashing sound.

5 PENT-UP ANGER

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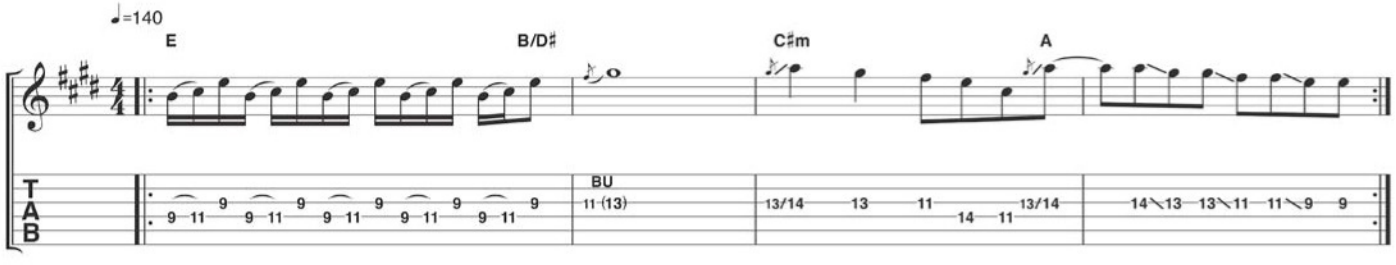

Try your hand at one of Noel Gallagher's favourite repeating pentatonic lead tricks, which you can hear in tracks such as *Don't Look Back In Anger*. Listen also to Manic Street Preachers for effective, melodic lead licks as heard in *Enola/Alone* and *If You Tolerate This Your Children Will Be Next*.

A SUMMER OF Rock!

A great summer of rock is upon us. As festival season rolls on, some of the world's biggest guitar bands deliver brilliant new albums. In our huge feature you'll find in-depth interviews with Wolfgang Van Halen, Nita Strauss and Jake Kiszka, plus detailed track by track analyses of new albums by Foo Fighters, Queens Of The Stone Age and Avenged Sevenfold. If you turn to p38 you'll find a competition to win an EVH Wolfgang WG Standard QM worth £689. Just answer one easy question and enter online. Someone must win! We also salute the icons of the classic rock era with our epic lesson on how to play like Hendrix, Page, Clapton and more. And we begin by focusing on our cover artist, who's now taking his playing to the next level...

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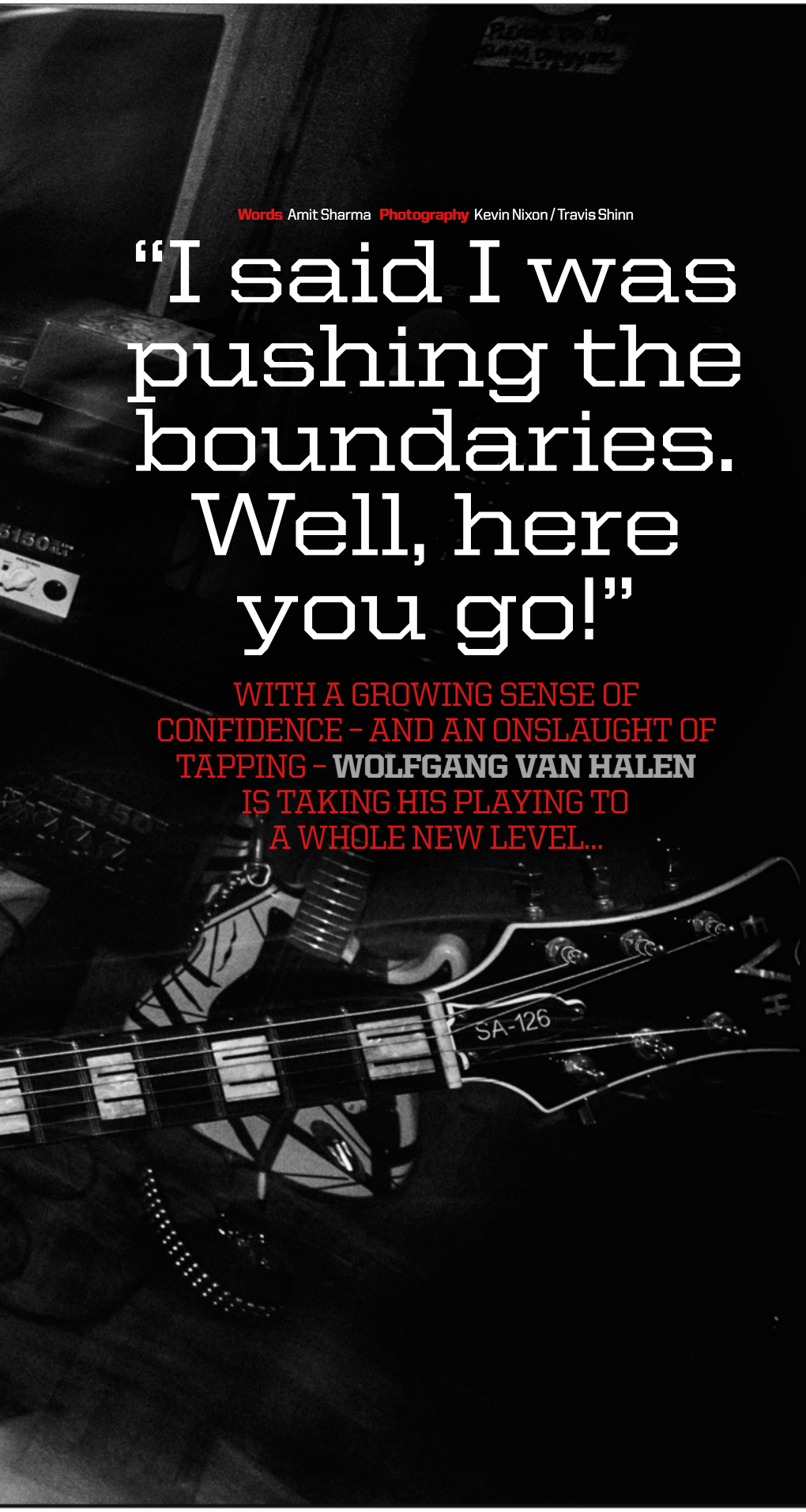
Photo Ana Massard



Words Amit Sharma **Photography** Kevin Nixon / Travis Shinn

"I said I was pushing the boundaries. Well, here you go!"

WITH A GROWING SENSE OF CONFIDENCE – AND AN ONSLAUGHT OF TAPPING – **WOLFGANG VAN HALEN** IS TAKING HIS PLAYING TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL...

Wolfgang Van Halen is a happy man. On a warm summer's day, he has just performed an acoustic set with his band Mammoth WVH for the very first time – for a select audience at the new Fender headquarters in London's West End. "I think it went well!" he grins, tying his hair back to uncover his eyes. "I usually write things on acoustic, so that's kinda where all my ideas start. It was different but also a bit familiar."

There is, of course, a lot of gear in this place, which houses showrooms for Fender's other music brands – from Jackson, Squier and Gretsch to Charvel, PreSonus and EVH. Here, you can find instruments and amps of all shapes and colours, catering for just about every kind of guitar sound you can possibly imagine, from vintage-style semi-hollows through mini tweeds to seven-string war machines via high gain stacks. But as a laidback, easy-going guy, Wolfgang tells TG: "Today I was just using whatever guitar they gave me. I wasn't too fussy; whatever works!"

The three-song acoustic set began with *Another Celebration At The End Of The World*, the lead single from new album *Mammoth II*, which saw Wolf executing a second-string tapping lick on the third, fifth, eight and tenth frets to spell out the E♭ minor pentatonic scale on the Fender Paramount acoustic in his hands, tuned half a step down. He then led the four-man band through another new single, *Like A Pastime*, before closing with a cover of the Foo Fighters hit *My Hero* in tribute to the late Foos drummer Taylor Hawkins, whose life was celebrated with two star-studded concerts last year, where Wolfgang joined forces with Dave Grohl, Justin Hawkins and Josh Freese to perform some of Taylor's favourite Van Halen tracks.

Wolf laughs as he describes one moment in the acoustic set – his solo in *Another Celebration At The End Of The World*. "Having to play that first solo was funny," he says. "I'm doing this double-tappy thing with my finger while moving the root note. It's almost more about the rhythm of it all because it keeps repeating and going over and over without resetting on the one. I had a lot of time to

VH HQ
Wolf tracking *Mammoth II* at 5150 studios

work on things like that. I asked myself, 'Do I want it to reset, or shall I just keep it going until I get to this bendy thing at the end?'"

And there is an air of quiet confidence about him as he settles on a grey leather sofa in the acoustic lounge to discuss the new album – and also what he has planned for the EVH brand he oversees with his late father Edward's long-time tech Matt Bruck.

As with 2021 debut album *Mammoth WVH*, the new album was written and performed by Wolfgang alone, and once again tracked at 5150 Studios in California, where every Van Halen album from *1984* onwards was recorded. "For me," Wolf says, "it's always been home. There's an old-school vibe, but we've updated the board and screens."

Mammoth II is the mark of a man growing more and more comfortable in his own skin. Case in point: it's perfectly natural for the child of someone who popularised, if not invented, two-handed tapping in rock music to be somewhat partial to the sound it creates. On the debut album, there was certainly a fair bit of that stuff, though admittedly the man at the helm of the music was exercising a level of caution. This time round, however, the gloves are off and he's going for gold – two-handed techniques are unapologetically everywhere. "I was trying to find out who I was on the last record but I came into this one with a lot more confidence," he reasons. "I feel like every song, or at least every solo, has a tapping lick at some point!"

> **"Not every song needs a solo... you need to respect the song"**

There is one song, *Erase Me*, that features a solo that's completely tapped with a phaser effect engaged – almost like there's no denying who the musician is and where he came from. At the mention of this, Wolfgang simply smiles and nods. You get the feeling that he's now earned himself full creative license to say what he needs to say without compromise. "It's funny how that *Erase Me* solo changes from a triplet rhythm to another kind of rolling idea," he says. "I really like playing that lead. And yeah, I kicked on the phaser for that one. To my ears it felt like a very phasey song, I think I ended up leaving it on the whole time!"

Like his father, Wolfgang uses his right index finger to tap, rather than the middle, which is what most players tend to go with. He's never really given it that much thought, however, admitting it's something that "came very naturally" given how much time he spent around one of the most inventive minds in guitar music. If you've ever seen the footage of Wolfgang performing the tapped part of the *Eruption* solo, shared last September to commemorate 45 years since it was recorded at Sunset Sound in Hollywood, you'll already know he's highly advanced when it comes to this particular skill.

"Most players use their middle… really?" Wolfgang says. "I guess my approach just came from growing up and watching Dad do it. I've been around tapping my whole life! What I often do is grip the neck with the thumb on my right hand, which frees up the index finger to tap. That's just how I've always done it. A lot of the sound is in the rhythm of how you tap. I've seen a lot of players who aren't familiar with the concept almost tap like they're pulling up on the string towards themselves, you know? That's not really how you should do it. You should be more in-line and parallel with the neck. Just watch videos of Dad doing it and you'll see how he got that sound…

"I kinda don't even know how to describe it, I just do it! I guess it just comes down to practising, like with anything. You have to do it slow until you can manage it. Play at one speed until you're good enough and also getting sick of it and then you bump it up five or 10 BPM to see if you can still nail it at a faster speed. Just keep going. The more time you put in, the better you get. It's like that 10,000 hour rule. You definitely don't just wake up being able to do fast stuff on guitar. You gotta keep at it because it's a result of all those thousands of hours learning."

When Wolfgang last spoke to TG at the beginning of this year, he teased that the new music would stretch the parameters of what his band are capable of. And while many a group have used notions such as "the melodic bits are more melodic and the heavy bits are heavier" to help drum up excitement for their latest creative ventures, in this case it's actually true. The album's opening track *Right* – with its low E octave riff, descending chromatics and thrashing rhythms – sets the mood of the album perfectly in that regard, stacking what could be his hardest riffs against his very biggest hooks.

"I think this song is a great representation of my whole outlook on music and the fact I started out on drums," he says. "It's a very rhythmic sort of thing. It's also, for some reason, one of many songs where I apparently refuse to start on the one. This main riff starts on the up! It's a perfect blend of melody and aggressive heaviness without either of them cancelling each other out. They're living together in perfect harmony, because you've got the really melodic chorus but after the crazy solo there's practically a f*cking djent part! The last time we spoke, I said I was pushing the boundaries of what this band could be. Well, here you go!"

Much like the song itself, the solo graduates through its own stages of metamorphosis – from the octave bends at the start, the high string diads and E minor blues to the frenetic alternate picking and two-handed taps. "I like to write my solos almost as if they're their own little songs," he explains. "On this one I was really trying to accentuate that rhythm without going right into the main solo first. It introduces that section without throwing the listener off the beat. I didn't want to just throw

"I've been around tapping my whole life!"

"I got my closure when I played the Taylor Hawkins tribute shows"

a bunch of stuff on top of it – I wanted to lull people into the rhythm and then let the solo take over! It ebbs and flows in a way that tells a story – it's not just w*nk the whole time."

But of course, all lead guitar players tend to have that devil on their shoulders, and Wolfgang certainly is no exception. "Oh, there's plenty of w*nk near the end, for sure," he laughs, adding, "like all good solos should have!"

If the opening riff to *Like A Pastime* sounds almost like a CD skipping, that's because it was written while the guitarist had been listening to Swedish tech-metal and trying to explain the concept of polyrhythms to his fiancée. He still has that initial demo on his phone and plays it to TG just to illustrate how big ideas can spring from the most unlikely of places. "I had been listening to the new Meshuggah album and was trying to tell her how much I like it," he recalls. "I was saying stuff like 'Listen to how they do this on top of other stuff like that, isn't that so cool?!' And she was like, 'I have no idea what the hell you're talking about!' So I had this idea to bring her into my studio and ended up recording this one-minute-long demo. The early title for it was 'Polyrhythm'! I just wanted to show her how guitars and drums could lock in together playing different rhythms, and it ended up being a really f*ckin' good song."

The track is also notable for the staccato harmonised lines that show a different side of Wolfgang's creative personality, this time in the form of an "almost new wave kind of thing". Describing himself as a "songwriter first and foremost", it was a piece that simply didn't call for any lead guitar stunts. Despite the largely overwhelmingly positive reaction to the single, he's aware of a vocal minority hoping for more fretboard pyrotechnics, and rightfully points out there's always a time and place for such things. "There were a couple of people who were disappointed, but not every song needs a solo," notes Wolfgang. "Solos are fun but you need to respect the song. If you listen to a song just for the 20 seconds after the second chorus, come on, that's kinda disrespecting the song!"

Other highlights from the album include *Miles Above*, which thickens out A-string powerchords with the lower fifth interval on the E string ("I always heard that trick in Weezer riffs, it's almost like an inversion"), and *I'm Alright*, which employs layered arpeggios to set the stage for the honky-tonk pianos and octave chords of its "classic-sounding" chorus. But one of the album's biggest guitar hero moments arrives in the form of *Take A Bow*, which starts with a suspenseful chord that descends one note at a time and eventually builds into one of the most epic solos we've heard from Wolfgang thus far, tastefully milking notes from B♭ Dorian in a way not dissimilar to David Gilmour and even nodding to the Van Halen *Panama* solo with its G-string bend and multiple taps higher up the neck…

"Yeah, that G-string bend and tap was very much one of my dad's moves," he says,

"HIS GUITAR IS BASICALLY THE VOICE"

Wolfgang salutes a modern guitar hero

Wolfgang Van Halen's favourite modern guitarist is Aaron Marshall, the creative mastermind behind Canadian instrumental prog-metallers Intervals.

Wolf tells TG: "The thing that has always been reinforced by listening to Intervals is actually a lesson my dad always taught me – melody is key. It's important to be able to hum or sing a solo. Aaron is the king of catchy melodies. His most recent album, *Circadian*, is just perfect front to back. And the very first song *5-HTP* is one of my favourite songs ever. It's in my top 10 of all-time. It's a song I can listen to no matter what mood I'm in. My fiancée has had to hear it thousands and thousands of times from me listening to it or trying to learn it… Not that she's complaining, she loves it too! But it's easily one of the most played songs in my house. I know it's instrumental music but his guitar is basically the voice. There are vocal hooks being played on guitar, which is what makes it so wonderful to listen to. There are proper choruses and verses, and at the same time, there are flourishes of technicality and aggressiveness. More than anything, I adore his use of melody and he's unlike any other guitar player out there right now. He's just the best. He actually showed me some demos of the new stuff he's working on right now… it's so f*cking good. I'm very excited to hear the finished thing."

Photo Wyatt Clough

"and it just ended up in what I do, too! That song is very special to me. It all started with that opening idea, where I'm playing a chord and moving down on one of the strings. It's very mature and moody for us. And the solo is also unlike anything I've done before. I was just sitting there jamming along to the riff on repeat and ended up crafting that whole thing, crescendo-ing with that tapping part. I was just following my ears and what felt right while sat there. Maybe if there is a David Gilmour connection it's because of the gaps in between the notes and, like you said, that whole Dorian feel. If it sounds like a guy in a room with his eyes shut, that's pretty much how it came about!"

Take A Bow is also notable for being the only track on the album to feature any of the historic instruments from the family collection – specifically, one of the most iconic guitars in the history of rock 'n' roll. "The Frankenstein was what I used on that solo," Wolf says. "I was thinking about using it for a bunch of songs, but in the end it was only that solo because it meant a lot to me. I didn't even just use the Frankenstein, I had it plugged into my Dad's original Marshall head and cabinet… so it was exactly what he used for the early Van Halen stuff. I think you can hear it's that tone. Everything else was done through my 50-watt 6L6 5150III through a 4x12, the exact same head and cab I used at the Taylor Hawkins shows – which, for some reason, on tape I named 'Noel' and 'Liam' at the Wembley gig! And, believe it or not, those clean guitars at the beginning are my new SA-126, not a Tele or single-coil guitar. Which goes to show how versatile this guitar is – it doesn't even have a split-coil mode. I was using my neck pickup and we added a little bit of reverb, that was it!"

Speaking of which, the guitarist's new SA-126 signature (referencing his father's birth date, much like the 1991 Van Halen instrumental *316* was named to celebrate Wolfgang's arrival) is now slated for a 2024 release. Wolfgang describes his third prototype in Tobacco Sunburst as "the sound of Mammoth II" given that it was used for the riffs and leads heard every track – except for the aforementioned *Take A Bow* solo. There is no definitive date on the release but the guitarist is able to confirm: "Burst and Stealth Black will most likely be among the different finishes". Matt Bruck has also confirmed, "Ed left lots of ideas", and teased a 24-fret Wolfgang model as well as hardtail options, the former of which can be seen in Mammoth VH co-guitarist Jon Jourdan's hands in the *Another Celebration…* video. While the SA-126 is very much Wolfgang's priority right now, there are plenty of exciting things in the works.

"We take it very seriously," he says, of his duties overseeing the family brand and continuing the legacy. "I'm in meetings all the time with the higher-ups at Fender. We have a long-planned future. There were so many ideas that my dad left us, as well as ones me and Matt are coming up with, like the SA-126. There's so much in store. It couldn't be in better hands with Matt also in charge. He's so important, so brilliant and so smart. He's been working for the brand since the beginning. I'm just there to help make sure everything's happening properly and being there because that's what my Dad wanted."

"I didn't just use the Frankenstein. I had it plugged into my dad's original Marshall head and cabinet"

There has also been excitement over the new EVH collaboration with Boss, reimagining Eddie's favoured SD-3000 delay rack in pedal form, with Eddie's own settings included. "It's an incredible pedal," Wolfgang smiles. "Matt worked very, very hard on making sure it was an absolute perfect recreation of my dad's original rack settings. I think Pete Thorn did a wonderful job demonstrating what that pedal is capable of in the promotional video. I'll definitely add it to my 'board at some point for some fun."

But anyone hoping to hear Wolfgang engaging those classic sounds for covers of *Panama*, *Hot For Teacher* and *On Fire* – as he did at the two Taylor Hawkins tribute shows – would be advised not to hold their breath. As sad as it may be for a lot of fans, Wolfgang sees little chance of a Van Halen reunion tribute show or tour to honour his father. It is what it is, he shrugs.

"Unfortunately, with the way Van Halen operates and has operated, I don't think it's possible," he admits. "With Foo Fighters and what they pulled off with the Taylor Hawkins tributes, the whole organisation from the ground up is very rooted in not too much personnel. With Van Halen and all of the history behind it, there may be a bit too much of that to be put aside for what should happen. Personally, I feel like I got my closure when I played the Taylor Hawkins tributes, because – at least just for me – they were just as much about my dad as they were Taylor."

Joe Satriani – the man who at one point was mooted to play guitar in any Van Halen tribute event or tour – was so impressed by Wolfgang's performances at the Taylor Hawkins concerts that he counted himself out of the running and admitted that no one but Wolfgang should be up there playing those songs. "That was very kind and sweet of him," Wolfgang says. "Joe is a wonderful guitar player that can pretty much do anything."

When he launched Mammoth WVH, Wolfgang vowed that with this band he would never play Van Halen songs – a vow he intends to keep. That said, he expresses pride in how he performed those songs at the Taylor Hawkins shows.

"If there was ever any time to do it, it was then," he says. "And I was happy that I found the strength to pull it off, because I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to do it. But man… It happened and I'm very happy I did it. *Panama* was so fun to play. Obviously I'm intimately familiar with the music, but I never knew how to play that stuff. I had to learn all of it in the month building up to the first show. *Hot For Teacher* is another example of that clever rolling tapping thing. It's not just tapping up in one direction, barring in one place. It moves up and down on the same string before moving onto the next. And then it goes into that boogie riff. On paper, that song would never have been a successful single! What kind of hit starts with a drum solo into a guitar solo for a minute and a half? It's pretty funny…

"I guess things like that came really natural to me because I grew up around all that stuff. And *On Fire* was a blast – the leads are almost like warm-up at points when you're climbing up those scales really fast. I was very grateful for the opportunity to be part of those celebrations – it meant a lot! I got a lot of my feelings out when we did those shows. That's what I've come to terms with…"

He pauses for a brief moment before stating in conclusion: "When it comes to Van Halen, there's too much that isn't quite right. Some things are just the way they are, unfortunately. But right now, it's all systems go with my own band."

Mammoth II is released on August 4.

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WOLFGANG VAN HALEN

Words Amit Sharma Photos Anna Massard / Johnny Young

"I approached this record as a more rounded player"

Nita Strauss can shred with the best of them, but her new solo album features 'radio songs' with guest-star vocalists – plus a showdown with mentor **Marty Friedman**

It's been a rollercoaster couple of years for Nita Strauss. In October 2021, she topped the American rock charts with *Dead Inside*, which saw her team up with Disturbed vocalist David Draiman. Last summer, the American guitarist – who made history in 2018 as Ibanez's first female signature artist – left her position in the Alice Cooper band to join forces with pop star Demi Lovato. And now, having toured again with Alice, she returns with her long-awaited second solo album, *The Call Of The Void*.

While the predecessor, 2018's *Controlled Chaos*, was a completely instrumental affair, her latest venture sees her going the other way with more vocal-led tracks, including features with Alissa White-Gluz (Arch Enemy), Anders Fridén (In Flames) and even Alice Cooper himself. So what made her decide to switch things up?

"It started out as one or two collaborations and then it just snowballed," Nita says. "I guess it just evolved that way. At one point my label said 'Why not just release two separate albums?' But I felt it would end up giving more attention to the one with all the features and radio songs. The instrumentals, which are what I mainly love and want to do, would have fallen by the wayside.

"I worked very hard to make the album I *wanted* to make. My label were very supportive. They signed me as an instrumental solo artist with no inclination that I'd give them a song like *Dead Inside*, which ended up being a number one song. They even suggested doing the first half instrumental and the second with vocals, or vice versa, and I said, 'No, because I want to lay it out in a certain way and tell a story'. They listened and it ended up exactly how it should be…"

Talking to TG from her home studio, Nita discusses the key tracks on the album and the creative process behind them…

The opening track, *Summer Storm*, builds very quickly from downtuned clean guitars to neoclassical harmonised leads and then triplet riffing…

It was partly inspired by the first song on Dragonforce's *Sonic Firestorm* album, which is called *My Spirit Will Go On*. It does this thing where it builds and builds, starting off with a clean guitar and going from there. I love songs that do that. Funnily enough, *Summer Storm* wasn't necessarily written to be the first track on the record but it came out so cool I felt it could be my version of that Dragonforce opener.

There are parts of your solo that utilise two-string 'mini sweeps' – which can help cover a lot of melodic distance very quickly without going into full arpeggio mode…

I picked that stuff up from Yngwie Malmsteen, probably when I was learning his *Rising Force* solo. I can do the three- and five-string sweeps in different positions, but there's something extra cool about those little ones. I like it that you call them mini sweeps, because that's what they are! They're so easy to throw in and very playable live too, which is key. It's easy to sit in the studio and do these gigantic stretches but it's different when you've got to go on tour and play that sh*t! I want to write things I can execute well on stage. It's okay to go a little further, sure, but you can't go *too* far!

AT A STRETCH

"It's easy to sit in the studio and do these gigantic stretches," Nita says, "but it's different when you've got to go on tour and play that sh*t!"

What's your best tip for making these sweeps sound so effortless?

It's all about starting off slowly and cleanly. Then you start doing it a little *less* slowly and keep going from there – don't think 'fast' in terms of how you imagine it, think 'less slow' every time you slightly increase the tempo. That's the only way you can get fast and still sound very clean. It's very painstaking. Honestly, getting good at sweep picking for me was like rolling a heavy ball up a steep hill. It has to be baby steps, one bit at a time.

You've always described yourself as more of a legato player, but judging from some of the alternate picking runs on the opening track, you've really been working on your right hand.

I still don't think of myself as a good alternate picker! It's never been a strong point. I don't know if there was one particular exercise that helped. I just knew I wanted to approach this record as a more rounded player. I took more time with it too. I made *Controlled Chaos* in three months. This one took three *years*, from a very different perspective in terms of how I played, having vocalists, working with outside writers to help me understand the subtleties and nuances of creating radio songs that are completely different to the shred stuff I'm known for.

Maybe some of Paul Gilbert's legendary exercises came in handy though, right?

You know, there's a fast alternate lick in that first verse that I probably lifted from his parts in Racer X's *Technical Difficulties*! It definitely has that Paul Gilbert vibe to it. I wasn't sat there trying to copy anything but I guess you're right… there were definitely a lot of Paul Gilbert exercises happening in my house over quarantine!

The solo in *Digital Bullets* has some wide interval taps that are almost keyboard-like.

Yeah, they are quite wide! I have to put my guitar on my knees for that one!

"GETTING GOOD AT SWEEP PICKING WAS LIKE ROLLING A HEAVY BALL UP A STEEP HILL"

That song was a co-write with Johnny Andrews, who has worked with Motionless In White, Halestorm and others. It was my first time working with an outside writer. I'd done co-writes for other people but never for myself. He asked what made me angry and I said, 'All these motherf*ckers on the Internet who tell everybody else how to live their lives but don't have any real-world experience!' Like all the detractors from the Demi Lovato thing last year… They're not actual musicians working in the industry. They're just keyboard warriors, firing digital bullets from behind a screen but never being strong enough to say those things to someone's face. Crafting this song and solo was a big 'F*ck you' to all the haters. I think it was Johnny who said, 'Why don't you have an *Eruption* moment as a big middle finger to these people?' So I came up with that!"

You generally tend to stick with your Ibanez Jiva signatures and either Marshall amps or Boss multi-effects when you play live. What are we hearing on this album?
I would say 85% of the record was done with the original JivaX, which came out in 2020. When I was designing the range, versatility was the first thing in my mind. When I used to go to the studio as a younger player, I would bring this guitar for that and another for something else. It's like you'd need a Les Paul for rhythms, your Ibanez for leads, an acoustic for cleans and so on. And I wanted to bring just *one* instrument that could do everything. The Jiva, for me, is that guitar. I worked closely with Larry DiMarzio on the Pandemonium pickups, which are a huge part of the sound. The African Mahogany body rings so true, especially because the Pandemonium pickups are really hot. But if you split the coils, it can sound so clean. And the ebony fretboard makes your fingers feel like they are just bouncing right off it.

So what are the other guitars we are hearing and what did you put them through?
The other 15% was done using an RG with an Evertune bridge, which was great for the lower rhythms. If you're in drop C, it's very easy to throw the string a little out of tune if you're picking hard – and I chose to pick some of the riffs *really* hard. There's also a little bit of seven-string, like on the Alice Cooper track *Winner Takes All*, and layered into some other tracks. Using digital gear made it really straightforward going back and forth between different studios. I used the Archetype: Tim Henson by Neural DSP and, of course, the Gojira plug-in because *everyone* loves that. The rest was done using my Kemper live tones, which has all my Marshalls profiled into it.

Shred legend and former Megadeth star Marty Friedman guests on the grand finale, *Surfacing*. What did you learn from working with him?
Talk about a storyteller! I've learned so much from Marty over the years. He knows what he wants. This collaboration was such an education for me, as a sort-of young guitar player at the foot of the master! The first metal song I ever heard had Marty playing guitar on it. We fleshed out the whole concept together. I sent him some riffs and then he sent back this crazy song with his own ideas. Funnily enough, there was a quote I read from him recently which said something like, 'Nita's not afraid of a little hard work!' referring to how this song went back and forth. I *wanted* him to critique me…

And what kind of advice did he give you, exactly?
He would tell me how I could make melodies better and what notes I should use instead of the ones I'd initially chosen. I came out the other side a better player. He sent pages of detailed notes and through him I learned you have to know what your story is and what you're trying to say or convey. Pick phrases that help tell the story. Resist the temptation to use your songs to show off your fastest licks. It's about the message of the music rather than a bunch of notes you can play fast one after another. I had Marty's *Exotic Metal Guitar* instructional DVD growing up. Honestly, I learned so much from that – as well as John Petrucci's *Rock Discipline*, Yngwie's *Play Loud* or Frank Gambale's *Modes: No More Mystery*… which is how I learned you can go from A natural minor to G Mixolydian or C Ionian and move between those shapes. It's just a case of taking a little walk down the neck through the different modes of the same scale. That's when the whole fretboard opened up for me. All of these greats shaped what us guitar players do now!
The Call Of The Void is out now

"JANGLY LAYERS, CRUNCHING FUZZ, EPIC SOUNDS..."

Foo Fighters: *But Here We Are* – track by track

Words Jenna Scaramanga **Photo** Danny Clinch

The first Foo Fighters album since Taylor Hawkins' tragic death is one marked by grief. In addition to Hawkins, Dave Grohl's mother Virginia passed away in August 2022. But if you were expecting an album that was either mellow or depressing, you'd be mistaken. Musically, at least, *But Here We Are* has plenty of joyful moments, and the band rocks as hard as ever. Grohl and his fellow axemen Pat Smear and Chris Shiflett have crafted layers of clever guitar parts that demonstrate their mastery of songwriting. Clean, jangly layers rub against crunching fuzz to produce some of the most epic sounds the Foos have ever given us.

1 RESCUED

The opening jangly, almost-clean chords have Grohl's signature combination of high fretted notes and open strings. When a huge, offbeat fuzz riff enters alongside it, there's only one band this could be. A melodic octave line in the bridge coincides with the hi-hat moving to an urgent 16th note pattern similar to 1997 classic *Everlong*. Instead of pushing even louder, though, the chorus drops to one sustaining chord before kicking into a half-time groove. The Foos will not be letting anyone get bored.

2 UNDER YOU

An immediate pop single, the opening lead guitar hook on this uses unison bends and gets a vocal quality from some tasty phasing effects. The bass is massive and provides a lot of the grit in the overall sound. Straightforward and memorable, the chorus is a testament to the continued powers of bashing out powerchords under a great melody.

3 HEAR VOICES

This is moodier and more atmospheric than the preceding tracks. The band's strength has always been Grohl's ability to write guitar parts like a drummer, and the verses groove like only his can. The pre-chorus uses some Brian May-style powerchord shapes before leaping unexpectedly from E♭ minor to E♭ major. A guitar overdub jangles out a major 7 arpeggio, so when the chorus pulls back to raw powerchords back in a minor key, it's totally visceral.

4 BUT HERE WE ARE

What were we saying about rhythmic invention? The title track leaps between on-the-beat and off-the-beat reminiscent of 2005's *DOA*, except this is in 7/4. The Foos proved they could write an accessible song in seven with 2002's *Times Like These*, and this is another masterclass. Like many Foos songs, there's a two-part verse structure, so the verse is followed by what sounds like a pre-chorus, only to move into the actual pre-chorus eight bars later. When the actual chorus hits they move into 4/4 for a straight up anthemic hit. A titanic guitar solo transforms one repeated melodic idea across the neck before the entire band syncs up to accent the rhythm of Chris Shiflett's screaming bends.

5 THE GLASS

The album's first ballad has a verse so catchy most bands would have used it as a chorus. Acoustic guitars are gradually joined by additional layers of electric guitars – there's nothing gratuitous about having three guitarists in the Foos. The solo ends with an epic harmonised lick, another nod to Queen.

6 NOTHING AT ALL

As we hit the halfway mark, this album still has plenty of new moods left to offer. Another funky bassline is accented by chords on the 2 & 4, reminiscent of reggae-influenced British bands like The Clash. The chorus explodes into double time. Although the production is bigger and cleaner than Grohl's Seattle punk roots, his screams and the immediacy of the dry guitar sounds make the chorus sound genuinely raw.

7 SHOW ME HOW

After that rawness, *Show Me How* enters all lush and ambient, with delays, dense reverbs and harmonised vocals. The chorus effect on the lead guitar hook reminds TG a little of Nirvana, although it doesn't sound like Kurt's Small Clone, and the verses have the cleanest and lushest tones of the album.

8 BEYOND ME

This power ballad opens with guitar chords cleverly arranged to sound piano-like. The band creates a symphony of guitars from the first chorus, seeming to float freely without drums beneath.

9 THE TEACHER

A ten-minute song following a power ballad? It's a long way from Seattle punk. Ironically, this has the verse that perhaps most resembles early Foos on the album. You might think this is the band exploring their Rush influence, but surprisingly it stays in 4/4 until almost nine minutes in, when it switches between 5/4 and 4/4 bars.

10 REST

Opening peacefully after the closing insanity of *The Teacher*, the album's final track has Grohl almost whispering over drop D acoustic chords. This is the most Kurt Cobain-esque chord progression of the album, as though Grohl is returning to his roots to deliver the closing message. At the halfway point, the most enormous fuzz chords you've ever heard shatter the peace, ending on a triumphant and emotional note.

But Here We Are is out now.

When Greta Van Fleet burst onto the airwaves in 2017 with *Highway Tune*, the Michigan born band of (mostly) brothers were quick to amass a legion of fans – both young and old – and all equally exhilarated by their refreshing yet retro brand of guitar-driven rock 'n' roll. Since then, they've cemented their status as 21st century rock gods with two acclaimed LPs, scooped a Grammy, topped just about every chart that matters and become one of the most in-demand live acts on the planet – selling out every single one of their headline shows in the last two years and shifting well over a million tickets worldwide.

Their rise to stardom has been the very definition of meteoric, and as they return with their third full-length album *Starcatcher*, the quartet's chops are hotter than ever, their songcraft more ambitious and they continue to pour their energies into artistic growth.

"It's never going to be an easy process if you are trying to constantly evolve," muses guitarist Jake Kiszka, speaking from his home in Nashville. "You could repeat yourself and it could be successful – I'm sure people would dig it – but, at the same time, stagnation is a form of death…"

So, instead of tethering themselves to a formula based upon proven commercial appeal, the band's ethos when hatching songs for the new record was a little more "admirable", as Jake puts it. "Part of it was to be really aggressive and bring a lot of light and energy into the structure of the world," he says, "and part of it was to expand into territories that we hadn't covered."

As such, the 10-song collection's foundation of energetic rock riffs, propulsive grooves and fiery improvised guitar solos is augmented by a "deeply expansive landscape of influences", which spans folk, blues, Native American and world music traditions. To carry off these adventures into "different cultural musical territories" with authenticity and flair, Jake reveals that his creative process "involved a lot of toying around with alternate tunings, different guitars and different techniques."

Barnstorming rocker *The Falling Sky* is played in DADGAD, while *Sacred The Thread* is a meditative drop D slow burn. Folk-rock anthem *The Archer* is performed in open C and the album's lead single *Meeting The Master* was created in a tuning of Jake's own design, which he describes as being "like drop D, but you take the high D and low D and drop them down a half step further."

Guitar-wise, Jake Kiszka has become almost synonymous with his heavily battle-scarred 1961 Gibson Les Paul SG – affectionately dubbed 'The Beloved', and originally given to him on long term loan by the proprietor of the Chicago Music Exchange (now a close friend of the band). Jake used this PAF-adorned beast to "provide a lot of the framework for the guitar playing and the majority of the riffs and motifs" on the album. But, the recording process also saw him work his way through a handsome roster of other guitars that were provided by producer Dave Cobb, as well as a "car full" loaned by his Chicago Music Exchange pals.

The scene he describes is like a snapshot cut from many a guitar geek's wildest dreams. "We were recording in RCA Studio A in Nashville. You'd walk in and strewn across the ground would be all these guitar cases lying open. Depending on the song, I'd just walk over, grab a random guitar, hook it into a random amp and play it. There's a wide range of sonic variation from the guitar world on this record because every song had a random guitar, and if I was doing a dub, it'd be a different one. Some of these songs have three different guitars with three different amps, which was an interesting approach that I'd never really taken before."

Notably, on *Fate Of The Faithful*, you'll hear the instantly recognisable pedal steel-esque nuances of a B-Bender, which Jake claims "kind of came naturally" to him as an extension of his already highly expressive playing style. Then, he fell in love with "the third 335 that Gibson ever made" after trying out the extremely valuable guitar on several songs in combination with a Fender Princeton amp. "It was mind blowing," he enthuses. "It had this country star's name and this metallic lettering on the front, and I bet it had been played in RCA Studio A before! It came from Chicago and I put it against every guitar in the studio, and all the others that were brought down, and it slaughtered them all. It was like this divine prophet of a guitar that walked into the room."

As many players will attest, feeling a new instrument under the fingers is often all that's needed to inspire creativity, and for Jake, the pick and mix haul of outstanding instruments, combined with the relaxed working environment fostered by Dave Cobb, made for a seriously fruitful session. During their time at RCA, the producer would secretly record the band as they were workshopping ideas because it captured them in a relaxed state, unlike that which can sometimes occur when the red light is known to be on. "The majority of the record is just live in a room and you can kind of hear that," muses Jake. "It's kind of off the hinges. You can't really hide the mistakes, which is good!"

The new album has a looser and less meticulous feel to its predecessor, *The Battle At Garden's Gate*, which translates to a more direct, confident and spirited iteration of the GVF sound – one that's much more akin to their live performances. At the heart of it all are Jake's live-wire improvisational solos.

Reflecting upon a previous tendency towards fastidiousness, he notes that this marks something of a new approach for him. "I didn't believe in the philosophy of 'just take it and leave it,'" he laughs. "I wasn't of that philosophy yet, but this record has really changed my perspective on that because they're all improvised. None of them were written, so now I'm learning something

“I’m on a journey as a guitarist to achieve perfection”

HEAVY ROCK HEROES **GRETA VAN FLEET** ARE ON A MISSION TO EXPLORE NEW TERRITORY. FOR GUITARIST **JAKE KISZKA**, THIS MEANS DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES, RANDOM GUITARS AND ALL-IMPROVISED SOLOS. “STAGNATION,” HE SAYS, “IS A FORM OF DEATH.”

Words Ellie Rogers

back that I created in three takes, which is interesting!"

As well as signalling a surge in self-confidence, the move towards heightened spontaneity also boils down to the fact that Jake is simply a better player than he was six – or even two – years ago. "I couldn't have done it before because you have to learn your voice and the vernacular of that," he says matter of factly. "You have to be of a certain skill set to actually pull that off, and I don't think I would have been of the right skill set to be able to do that before. I suppose I'm on this eventual journey as a guitarist to achieve perfection," he continues thoughtfully. "I'm under the impression that I could dedicate my life to this craft and never truly attain it. But, there's so much more territory for me to cover as a player that I haven't been to and so much growth."

An area in which Jake experienced growth in real time was in the post-take treatments of his guitar tracks. Using a full suite of pedals on loan from Universal Audio, he details the main "trick that we used a lot" as follows: "I'd play back a guitar part or a riff and I'd be pulling or pushing the knobs as the feed was going through it, so I could effect it in playback and actually get the motion out of it, rather than it just being a case of clicking on a pedal and that being the effect. I could actually manipulate it and give it some voice. I was kind of doing that with *The Battle At Garden's Gate*, but this time I've been able to really master the technique."

His knack for re-imagining standard pedalboard practices also extends to the live environment, where he's been dabbling with

Photos Neil Krug/Getty

stereo variations of the classics in order to make the live experience "a little bit more interactive" for the audience, while replicating the "stereo-heavy" nature of the band's recorded output. "I was coming up with ways to inject that into the live performance," he explains. "I had this idea to do a stereo wah pedal, where it would effectively be a wah, but when it was heel to the ground, it'd be stereo left, and when it was toe to the ground, it'd be stereo right and it'd phase between the two."

On stage, you'll notice Jake employing his stereo wah to spectacular effect on songs like *Age Of Machine*, where he'll make the haunting opening riff "creep in and loom over the audience" with the innovative new toy. "I'm able to push my guitar across to the audience and move it around," he enthuses, and in his growing stereo arsenal, he also possesses a reverb and a slap delay, which he delights in "pinging back and forth rather intensely over the stereo PA system".

"These little things give it all a bit more depth," he smiles. "I've not heard of it being done before, but it's an interesting concept and it seems like it really works."

With creativity, innovation and personal playing development all brimming over at once, the 27 year-old musician describes himself as "ready to move on, divert and follow a tunnel somewhere else," now that *Starcatcher* is complete and ready to be toured across the globe. At the top of the aspirations list, he speaks of a desire to delve deeper into slide playing and to "honour the whole collective influence," of the blues greats in doing so.

His imagination has also been captivated by what he describes as "this undertone of new

"Some songs have three different guitars with three different amps"

wave, Middle Eastern guitar players and African guitar players coming into the contemporary scene," and Jake promises that we'll hear more "suspended pentatonic stuff and the Egyptian scale" mixed in with his classic rock roots in whatever comes next.

Quizzed on whether he might have ambitions of working with a certain US guitar manufacturing giant on a signature model any time soon – because, let's be honest, that '61 Les Paul SG of his is a prime candidate for such a project – he's more forthcoming than expected. "There's some talk about that and we'll just have to see," he smiles, suggesting that if he were to do it, a collaboration with Gibson's Murphy Lab (a division within the Custom Shop which creates expertly aged, handcrafted classics) might be "the way to go."

"My guitar has seen the face of war," he laughs, "So, you'd have to pretty heavily relic it!" Indeed, the 62 year old instrument, which is still all original, has had its sideways Vibrola tailpiece blocked off and Jake once had to improvise with a generous amount of tape to hold together a massive crack on the guitar's lower bout. "It's pretty brutalised, but I definitely think that there's some potential on the horizon to do that," he says. "I'd love to do something like it as an Ephiphone, so it's at a baseline that's affordable."

It's a noble ambition for a guitarist whose entire playing journey was catalysed by an early infatuation with the iconic double-cut design. "I think I was about 12 when I got an SG Standard with P90s," he recalls. "My father took me into a guitar shop and said, 'What interests you?'" Attracted first to its looks, then to the weight and feel of the guitar and then its classic rock bark, Jake's barely looked back since – although his current number one certainly commands a much heftier price tag, thanks to its vintage status.

"The majority of the record is just live in a room – and you can hear that"

But, a guitar's worth isn't determined solely by its monetary value, as Jake recently experienced in the most heartbreaking of ways when a thief threw a rock through the window of the band's Nashville office and made off with the very SG his father had bought for him all those years ago. "There's such a spiritual element associated with it," he laments. "It's not like going into someone's house and stealing a computer or a TV, so I'm still out there hunting for it."

Starcatcher is released on July 21.

BATTLE SCARRED
"My guitar has seen the face of war," says Jake of his '61 SG

WELCOME TO THE SLINKY FAMILY

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TRACK BY TRACK

"NEW VARIATIONS OF A CLASSIC TWO-GUITAR ATTACK"

Queens Of The Stone Age: *In Times New Roman...* track by track

Words Jenna Scaramanga **Photo** Danny Clinch

In Times New Roman... **is the final instalment of the trilogy started by 2013's *...Like Clockwork* and 2017's *Villains*. Those albums saw Queens Of The Stone Age achieving their biggest ever success, with the former giving them their first US number one album and the latter achieving the same in the UK. While *Villains* was helmed by super-producer Mark Ronson, the band handled those duties themselves for *Times...*, giving us rawer and more aggressive Queens than we've heard in some time. There's never been just one QOTSA guitar sound, the band instead playing with various shades of their signature mid-boosted fuzz, and fans will find new and nastier variations here.**

1 OBSCENERY

The power of the fuzz tones is matched only by the funky grind of this opening riff. It'll take you a moment to realise where beat one is, and then you'll be grooving. An occasional flanger makes that fuzz even nastier, and in the pre-chorus it swirls menacingly against Josh Homme's falsetto vocal. The band unexpectedly gives way to an orchestral string break for a stunning fake-out before the chorus.

2 PAPER MACHETE

Built around an urgent three-chord punk sequence, this song has a pummelling energy. The guitar solo is drenched in an octave fuzz, possibly Homme's favourite Fulltone Ultimate Octave. The solo itself is a work of brilliance, the octave effect becoming more prominent at certain points for a Whammy-like effect, and the sliding sequence of descending intervals is especially smart. Small lead fills and embellishments enhance the song all the way through.

3 NEGATIVE SPACE

Slowing things down to 100bpm leaves space for even more funk influence. The guitars hit staccato powerchords on the beat, and the gaps are punctuated with harmonics and scratching. There are nice pseudo-synth sounds thanks to a fuzz guitar overdub in the chorus. A twin-guitar solo moves between harmonised parts and contrasting licks, a really cool twist on the classic two-guitar attack.

4 TIME & PLACE

There's a great illusion when the unaccompanied opening riff, which sounds like quarter notes in 3/4, turns out to be a completely

different rhythm in 4/4. There are more adventures in unexpected lead guitar, with a sinister combination of harmonised string slides followed by an extremely high and nasty sounding solo which sounds pitch-shifted up. The outro has three simple but distinct parts overlayed in a fascinating syncopated groove.

5 MADE TO PARADE

A radical shift in feel here with a slow, heavy swing. There's a swagger here reminiscent of *Warsaw* by Them Crooked Vultures, Homme's 2009 collaboration with Dave Grohl and John Paul Jones. In the chorus, a Whammy pedal creates a haunting octave overdub. Pitch-shifted, modulated and harmonised clean lead guitars after that chorus show just how diverse electric guitars can sound. Few guitarists think about expanding their tonal palettes the way QOTSA are here.

6 CARNAVOYEUR

Josh Homme sounds more than a little like David Bowie on this track. The verse guitars play extremely sparse stabs in the verses, leaving space for huge reverbs and a truly colossal bass sound. A guitar hook kicks in after the choruses, and when it returns the second time round it's played in doublestops for ultra nastiness. The whole album mix does interesting things with the stereo field, and in this outro the drums move into the left speaker while the bass with distortion and envelope filter shifts into the right.

7 WHAT THE PEEPHOLE SAY

This feels like a return to normality, or as close to it as QOTSA get: a straightforward uptempo groove, a filthy bass sound, and guitar chord stabs enhanced by octave-shifted reverb. The chorus is powered by furious single-note fuzz, with overdubbed guitars playing in different octaves rather than the octave pedals used elsewhere. There are so many overdubs here and elsewhere that this album will reward time with headphones.

8 SICILY

Starting ominously with just bass and percussion, the guitars play a minimal and almost subliminal quarter-note bassline in the verses. When they kick into an octave Phrygian riff that becomes the song's main hook, there are definite shades of Zeppelin, if Zeppelin were a fuzz-obsessed desert rock band. That line is later doubled with strings while another guitar plays a Page-y solo, and, yup, we're in Kashmir, Arizona.

9 EMOTION SICKNESS

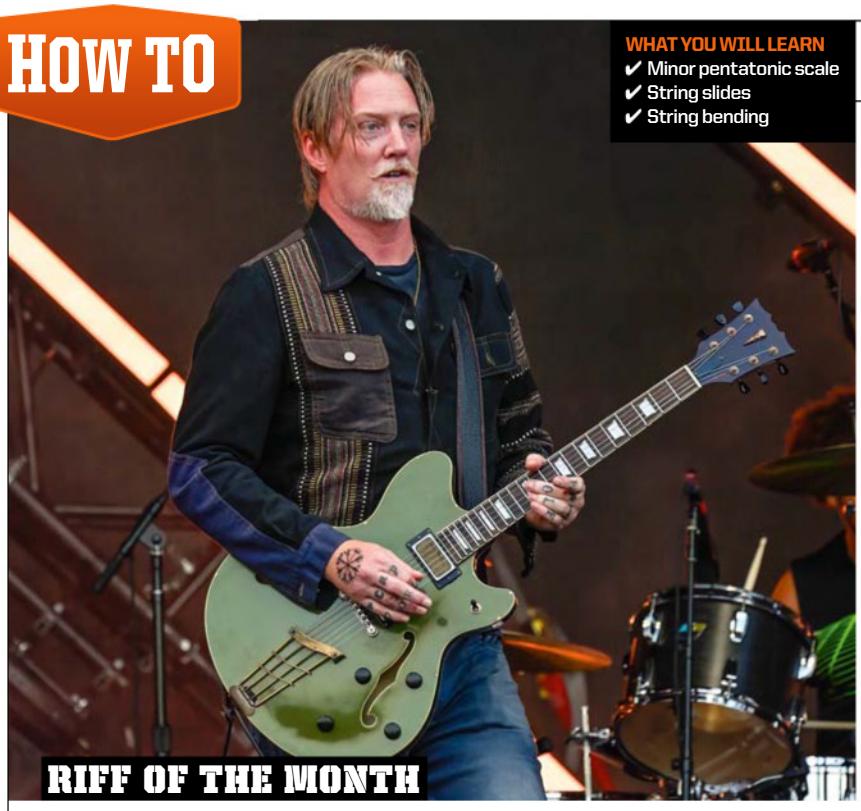
Only now do we reach the first single. It certainly has more straightforward hooks than some of the deeper cuts, but the guitar layers are no less intricate and the guitar tones no less fierce. The verses rely on an addictive but almost seasick syncopated groove, which makes the surf rock chorus feel all the more chill.

10 STRAIGHT JACKET FITTING

Closing with a nine-minute epic, this swings with a swagger similar to *Made To Parade*. In the right speaker there's an overdubbed chord with an intense tremolo effect that slows down just before it dies out. There's all kinds of madness en route to the outro, including another string section break, before it all winds down in a brooding acoustic meditation with ambient slide licks over the top.

In Times New Roman... is out now.

HOW TO

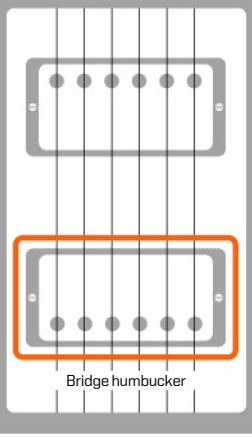


WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ Minor pentatonic scale
- ✔ String slides
- ✔ String bending

RIFF OF THE MONTH

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL OVERDRIVE



This riff is played with a growling, crunchy, overdriven tone on the bridge humbucker, most likely, of a semi-acoustic guitar. Set your amp's EQ controls to boost the mids and treble as this will enhance your pick attack for more bite. Roll off a little low end to prevent the tone from being boomy.

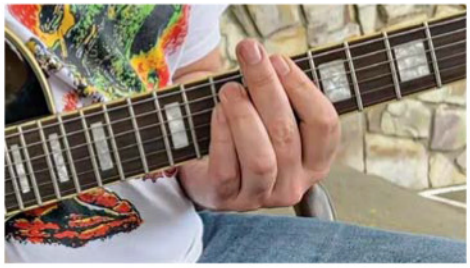
QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE

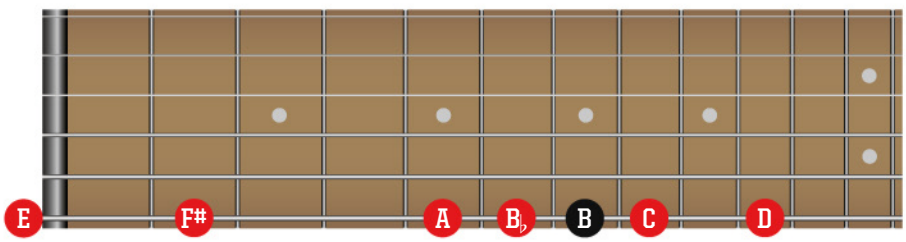
Emotion Sickness

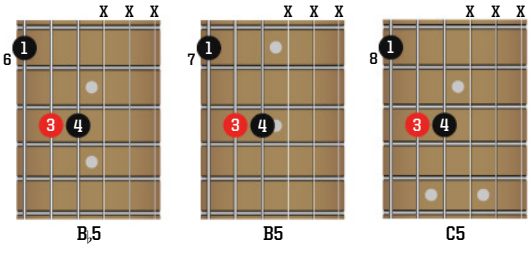
Emotion Sickness is the first single from the latest Queens Of The Stone Age album *In Times New Roman...* The song is cleverly arranged with multiple panned guitar parts which syncopate and overlap to create the overall groove. Here, we've picked out the main verse guitar riff which takes place mainly along the sixth string from the open string to 12th fret E. The action begins on beat 2 of the bar, with powerchord slides from B♭5 up to B5, from C5 down to B5, before staying on B5 for three further strums. After repeating the powerchord slides, play single notes from B minor pentatonic, first climbing down to the open E, then shifting up to 12th fret where there is a tone bend, followed by another tone bend at 10th fret. Be sure to watch our slowed down video play-through of the track to pick up on the finer details.

CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:32–0:49
Tempo: 125 bpm
Key/scale: B minor pentatonic scale
Main techniques: Powerchords, slides, string bending







This riff is based around the B minor pentatonic scale (B D E F♯ A) with two additional chromatic passing notes, B♭ and C, either side of the root note. The three notes B♭, B and C are played as root-5th-root powerchords, whereas the rest of the riff is played as single notes and single-note bends.

Photo Getty

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TRACK BY TRACK

"WILDLY UNPREDICTABLE IN THE BEST OF WAYS"

Avenged Sevenfold: *Life Is But A Dream...* track by track

Words Amit Sharma

Californian heavy metal stars Avenged Sevenfold introduced a progressive edge to their sound on the 2016 album *The Stage*, but that was a drop in the ocean compared to the mind-melting sonic evolution of *Life Is But A Dream...* – the band's most creatively ambitious record to date. In between their seemingly impossible transitions into jazz, classical and electronica, guitarists Synyster Gates and Zacky Vengeance prove yet again that they are one of the finest guitar duos working in modern metal, pairing razor-sharp riffing with the kind of arpeggios typified by shred masters like John Petrucci and Paul Gilbert.

1 GAME OVER

The album kicks off with a mellifluous flamenco style lullaby before erupting into a hellish symphony of distorted guitars and pounding drums. A minute later arrives the first solo from Synyster Gates – a smorgasbord of E minor blues licks, screaming Slayer-style harmonics and frenzied tapping. And it's at this point halfway into the track where everything calms down and cuts into an almost Sinatra-esque ballad section that confirms the next hour or so is, indeed, going to be something of a wild ride. Bring it on!

2 MATTEL

From its opening palm-muted low D chug to the heavily effected rhythms in the verse sections, *Mattel* is also full of surprises – including the Radiohead-ish moments where M. Shadows sings: *'Now I know this might sound crazy, but I've smelled the plastic daisies'*. Some glitchy effects are employed to disguise some of Gates' leads in amongst the synths, giving the song a very futuristic feel until its dramatic outro, which pairs the sounds of jazz piano with drum loops.

3 NOBODY

There are two things guaranteed to catch the attention of every guitar player listening to this third track – the first being the arpeggio played by Gates during its chorus, which sees him executing a minor and major string skipping licks with a tap for the highest note. And then for the song's last minute and a half, Gates unveils one of the most indulgent solos of his career to date, throwing in all kinds of modal sweeps as well as diminished runs and chromatic ideas over the Cm-Am7♭5-Gm-A♯ vamp.

4 WE LOVE YOU

There's an industrial feel to *We Love You* that's part Metallica and part Nine Inch Nails, with a scooped high gain sound that sits alongside the very finest tones the group have

ever recorded. Moving from soundtrack-ish calmness to full-throttle thrash, it's a song that screams for a solo that's brilliantly unhinged – which is precisely what Gates delivers, frenetically playing over non-diatonic chords from different keys. The outro couldn't be more different, as he reaches for the bottleneck to introduce some jangly acoustic charm.

5 COSMIC

The minute-and-a-half-long guitar solo that arrives early into the album's fifth track is, in many ways, Gates' tribute to Brian May. Though he's generally cited Dimebag, Slash, John Petrucci and Steve Vai as his main influences, everything from the staccato phrasing to the nasal tone for this solo points to the legendary Queen guitarist. As it builds and builds, however, Gates starts to introduce more of his signature licks and flaunt the techniques that make him one of the greatest metal players of his generation.

6 BEAUTIFUL MORNING

Anyone familiar with the Alice In Chains classic *Them Bones* may recognise the chromatically-ascending powerchords during the verses here, although – as you might expect by this point – things are not what they seem. One third of the way through, the metallic guitars disappear and make way for an ethereal keyboard interlude, which is followed by a heavily-modulated solo from Gates before the final half-time chorus. It's wildly unpredictable in the best of ways.

7 EASIER

A bit like hearing what would happen if *Far Beyond Driven*-era Pantera collaborated with Daft Punk, this is Avenged Sevenfold as you've never heard them before. The interplay between Zacky Vengeance and Gates during the solo section is spectacular, with Vengeance laying down some Hendrixian ideas where melodies are played within a static chord shape underneath the lead guitarist's Slash worship.

8 G

This track is the closest Avenged have ever come to sounding like Dream Theater, thanks to its idiosyncratic rhythms, downtuned riffing and technical wizardry. As Gates once told TG: "Hearing Dream Theater for the first time was a bit like going to Disneyland on acid. I had all the colours of the rainbow poking out at me. I also realised I'd never be that good, so it helped me be comfortable in my own skin."

9 (O)RDINARY

There's more Daft Punk-style vocoder effects on *(O)rdinary*, which is the album's shortest track at under three minutes. Mimicking funk master Nile Rodgers' contributions to the French electronic duo's final album *Random Access Memories*, there are some palm-muted single-string melodies buried at the back of the mix behind the synths. There are also heavily effected leads from Gates that, once again, sound less like guitars and more like keyboards.

10 (D)EATH

Here, there's more Sinatra-style balladry, with M. Shadows crooning along with strings – but when the guitars finally arrive, things take a brief industrial metal turn. These moments of atmospheric heaviness build even further during the song's dramatic final minute, ending in a deafening crescendo of swirling noise.

11 LIFE IS BUT A DREAM...

There are no guitars to be heard whatsoever on this instrumental closer – a solo piano performance by Synyster Gates that nods to the minimalist moodiness of French innovator Erik Satie, as well as the advanced classical harmony associated with composers like Wagner and Rachmaninoff. It's a perfect ending to an album full of surprises, rounding things off with a similar sense of sonic sophistication to how it all began.

Life Is But A Dream... is out now.

EASY GUITAR MODS

Get your six-string ready to rock with seven of the most important upgrades

Words Alex Lynham

Looking to breathe new life into an older axe, or just change things up a bit? Whatever the reason, making modifications and small improvements to your instrument is a common pastime for guitarists, and is usually a far more economical approach than buying a completely new guitar. What's more, there are many mods that can be done quite easily at home.

Improvements broadly fall into three categories, to our minds – looks, sound and feel. And if you have an entry-level instrument, providing it plays okay, simple things like shielding or rewiring can improve the basics, while switching pickups can make it punch vastly above its weight.

Making modifications to your guitar can be intimidating at first, and in most instances we'd recommend taking your guitar to a local tech to do the work. Most of the jobs here would be reasonably affordable and you could double up with a full re-string and setup to ensure your pride and joy is playing at its very best.

1. BLOCK YOUR TREM

WHY? Increase sustain, improve tuning stability

If you don't want to use your guitar's tremolo system but also don't wish to switch it for a hardtail unit you can block the trem. This mod in its most simple form involves putting a block between the rear of the trem cavity and the metal trem block, and supposedly leads to increased sustain. The best thing? It only costs as much as the small block of wood. And if a block of wood is too primitive for you, there are devices like the Tremol-no, which do the same job and offer more control so you can lock or unlock your trem more easily.

2. REPLACE YOUR PICKGUARD

WHY? New-look pickguard, noise reduction

For most guitars, switching out the pickguard is a cheap and easy way of overhauling the look of the instrument. These days, it's also possible to place custom art on a pickguard, and get it cut on the internet, or you can go to a local tech or luthier. Moreover, when changing your pickguard, you can also take the opportunity to shield it, and the pickup cavity, which will reduce the amount of noise and hum you have to deal with.

3. STRAP LOCKS

WHY? Secure your guitar against stage disasters

Strap locks come in two main types – there are complete strap systems, or attachments that work with your existing strap. The most simple attachment is a classic swing-top beer bottle washer, which is about £2, depending on which beer brand you choose, and as a bonus comes with a free beer! Both Dunlop and DiMarzio offer probably the best all-in-one strap lock systems, although you would have to ditch your existing strap.

4. UPGRADED NUT

WHY? Better sustain, better fit for specific string gauges, tackle string buzz

A new nut, especially if you're running a non-standard string gauge, can really change how the guitar resonates. It seems like a minor thing, but nuts made of brass, bone or synthetic composites can make a huge difference to your tone. They're relatively easy to install yourself, but we'd recommend taking your pride and joy to a tech, who will be able to fit you a nut set up to match the gauge of your choice of strings.

5. UPGRADED BRIDGE OR SADDLES

WHY? Improve sustain, intonation and action

In the 80s, a new bridge was the definitive guitar mod, and a lot of vintage-correct instruments were sacrificed at the altar of modding them into Superstrats. Though many bridge mods involve installing a Floyd Rose or similar locking tremolo system, just as many players go the other way, going from a trem to a hardtail or blocked bridge. Meanwhile, in the offset world, aftermarket parts from Staytrem and Mastery allow for improved intonation and sustain for otherwise problematic instruments.

If you're happy with your existing bridge but there are issues with intonation, buzz or sustain, then replacement saddles may do the job. A common mod for Jazzmasters is to switch to Mustang saddles, but there are aftermarket options available for most guitars. Graph Tech saddles promise fewer string breaks and better sustain, while piezoelectric saddles can emulate the sound of the piezo pickup on an electric guitar – though that's a far more complex job.

6. REPLACE YOUR PICKUPS

WHY? Radically change your guitar's sound

On an electric guitar, the biggest difference you can make to the sound of the instrument comes from changing the pickups. Aftermarket electric guitar pickup options are virtually endless, and it's not just a case of single coil or humbucker. There are active pickups like EMGs, or technologically-advanced Fishman Fluences. There are hot rails, cool rails, stacked coils, and even sustainer pickups, which are akin to an E-Bow. Consider also custom-wound pickups, which are a bit pricier, but can make your instrument truly unique. In most cases a pickup install is a job for a guitar tech, though a like-for-like replacement is achievable if you're confident with a screwdriver and soldering iron.

7. NEW CAPACITOR, POTS AND WIRING

WHY? Change switching options, brighter low-volume tones

Although wiring mods may sound complicated, many are easy, cheap and well-documented on the internet. Perhaps the most common mod of this type is a treble bleed mod, meaning that you can reduce your guitar's volume while preserving a more prominent treble range. Other mods allow for coil-splitting and interesting combinations of pickups.

Upgraded pots can supposedly alter your tone for the better when compared to a more standard example. Upgraded capacitors tend to offer only negligible sonic improvements – but if you've gone as far as upgrading pickups, pots and wiring, why not! As is often the case, offsets really lead the way with the wacky options, with some players setting up their offset like a Les Paul, and others changing the pickup-switching options to non-standard or out-of-phase combinations. It's a great way to get more from a guitar you love.

Photo Getty

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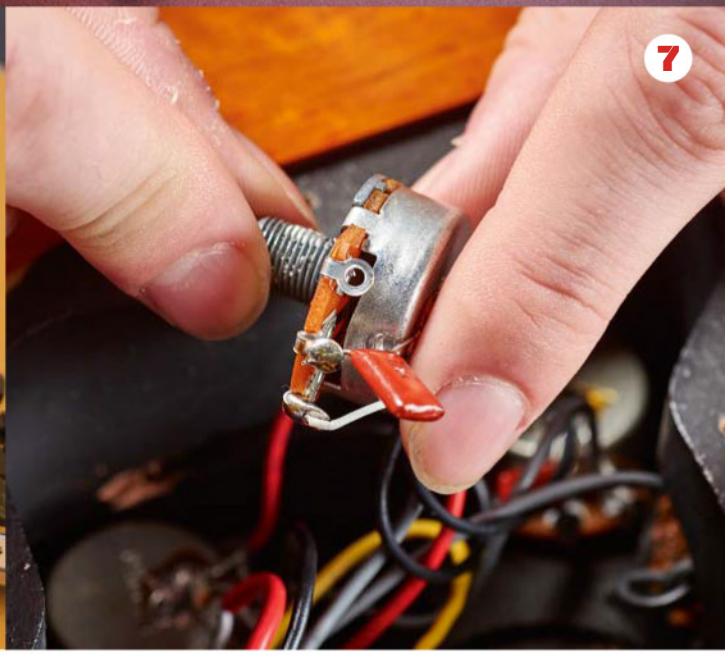
7

ROCK'S GREATEST PIONEERS

Get inside the playing styles of rock's most influential guitarists, from trailblazers Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton to later mavericks like Tom Morello and Matt Bellamy

This month, we take a whistle stop tour through the playing styles of the most influential rock guitarists of all time. We'll be concentrating our efforts on highlighting their key contributions – and that means you'll be looking at the most important techniques that have steered rock and influenced later generations.

We start off in the 1960s with players like Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton who took the vocabulary of the blues and supercharged it with Marshall stacks and no desire to turn them down. Next up are godfathers of hard rock and heavy metal, Ritchie Blackmore and Jimmy Page. Their influential riffing would go on to inspire generations of heavy rockers right up to the present day.

Other guitar innovations we look at come in the form of Eddie Van Halen's tapping technique, Tom Morello's kill switched rhythms and Matt Bellamy's use of the Whammy pedal.

With a mixture of rhythm and lead, clean and crunch, humbuckers and single coils, hopefully there's something for everyone… **Plug in and let's rock!**

1 JIMI HENDRIX: FIERY FUZZ LEAD

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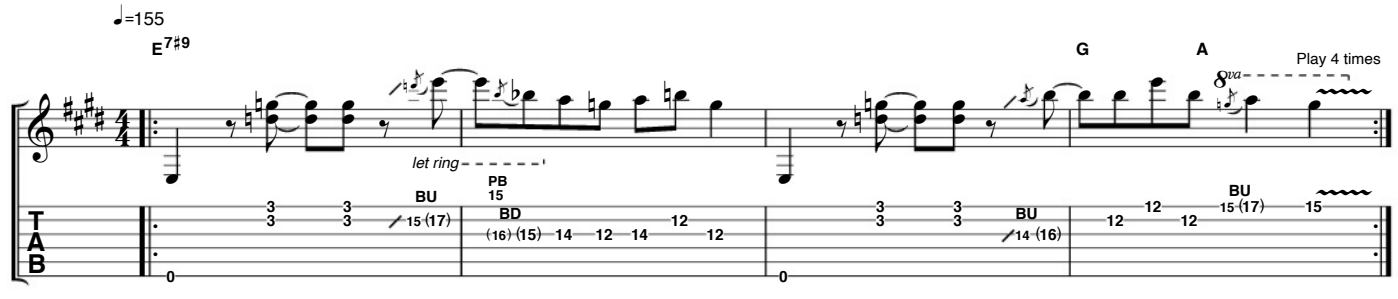

Possibly *the* single most important innovator in rock, Jimi Hendrix popularised techniques and effects that still inspire guitarists today. Our example combines a raspy fuzz distortion with a psychedelic sounding Uni-Vibe 'wobble'. Take care as you switch between the opening E7#9 chord and the high position minor pentatonic licks.

2 ERIC CLAPTON: BLUES-ROCK PHRASING

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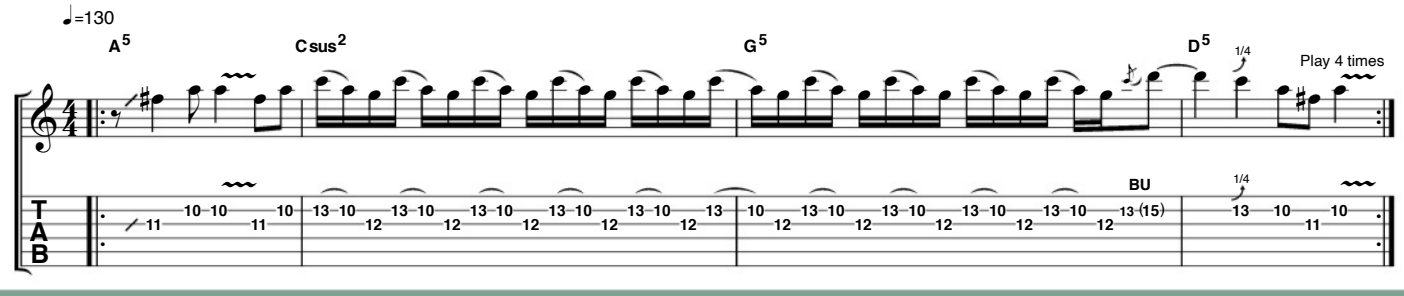

One of the most influential figures of the 1960s British Blues Invasion, Clapton was one of the early greats to authentically employ classic blues phrasing in rock. Typical techniques on show here in our lick are finger vibrato, string-bending and a simple repeating pentatonic phrase – which can serve as a canvas for further experimentation.

3 JIMMY PAGE: HARD ROCK RIFFING

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Led Zeppelin riff machine Jimmy Page helped lay the foundations for hard rock, and our example takes inspiration tracks like *Immigrant Song* and *Whole Lotta Love*. The fast picking on the sixth and fourth strings may take practice, so we recommended starting slowly. The funky 9th chord is heard in some of Zeppelin's bluesier tracks.

4 RITCHIE BLACKMORE: VIRTUOSO SOLOING

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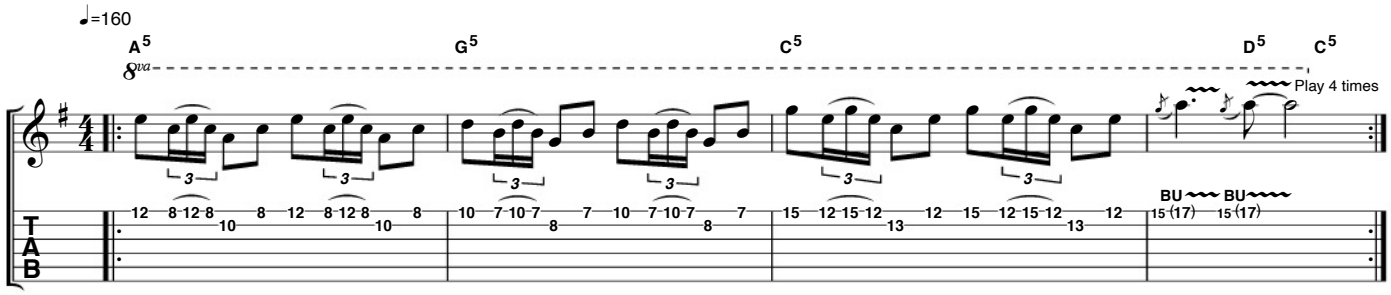

One of rock's first virtuosos, Deep Purple and Rainbow guitarist Ritchie Blackmore incorporated classical influences into his soloing, influencing a new wave of neo-classical shredders such as Yngwie Malmsteen. Our example is inspired by songs like *Highway Star*, and uses fast triad arpeggios that outline the chords.

5 DAVID GILMOUR: MELODIC PHRASING

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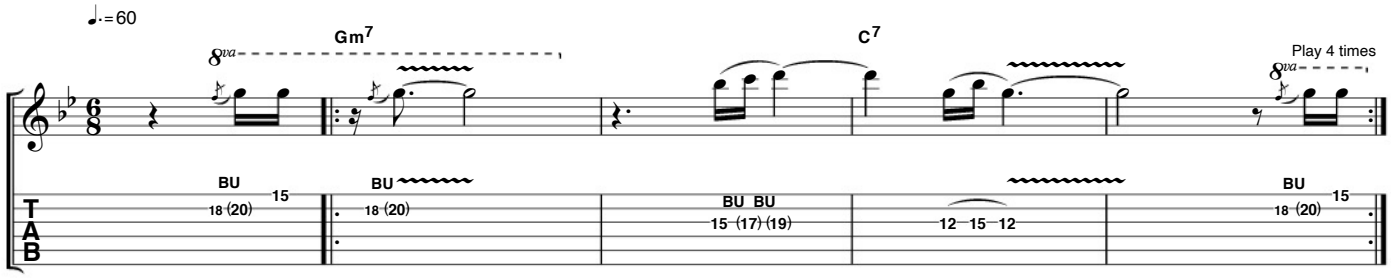

Pink Floyd's guitarist David Gilmour is a master of the melodic lead solo, blending authentic blues phrasing into the band's psychedelic backdrops. Our lick is inspired by clean-tone soloing on classic tracks *Shine On You Crazy Diamond* and *Echoes*. Watch out for the trademark Gilmour double bend, here pitched from B♭ to C to D.

6 EDDIE VAN HALEN: THE ALL-ROUND TECHNICIAN

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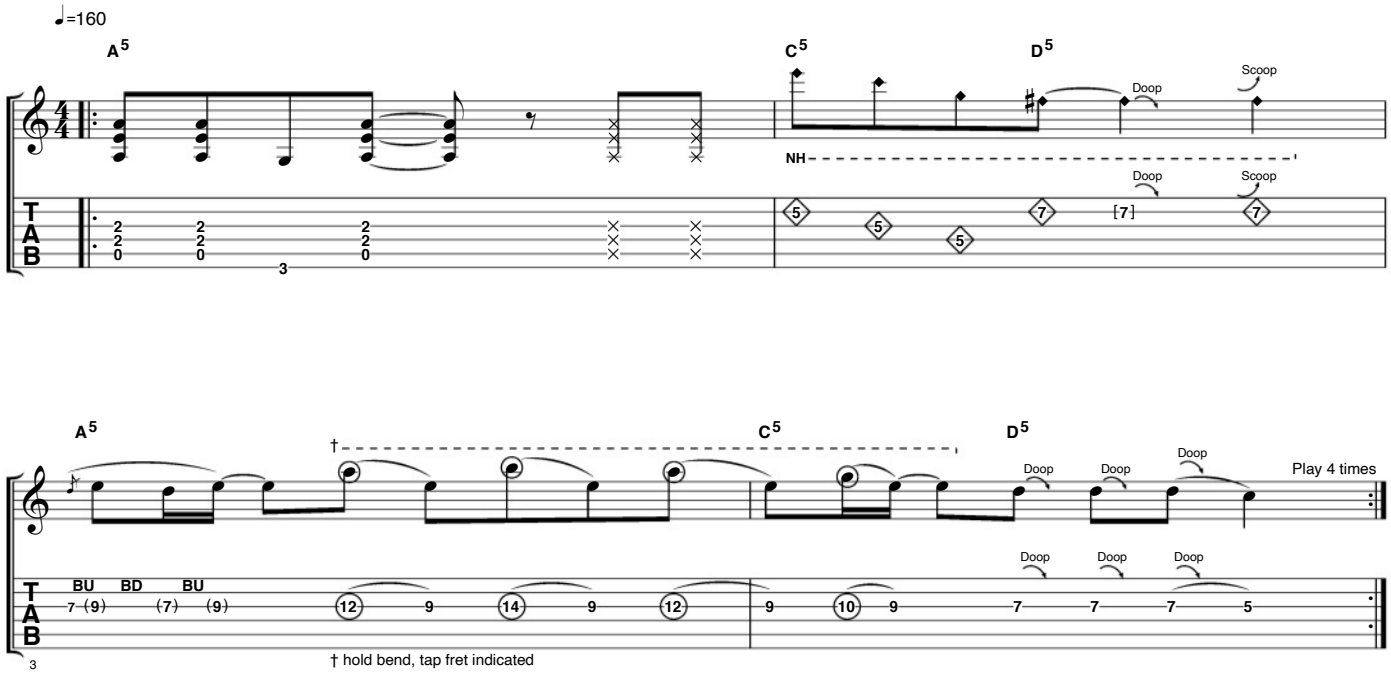

After Hendrix, Eddie Van Halen is surely the most influential rock guitarist of all time, pioneering and popularising techniques that inspired a generation of shredders – and there's plenty to get your teeth into here! We recommend breaking our example down bar by bar and working on each individual technique.

7 AC/DC: MALCOLM YOUNG-STYLE SPARSE RHYTHM

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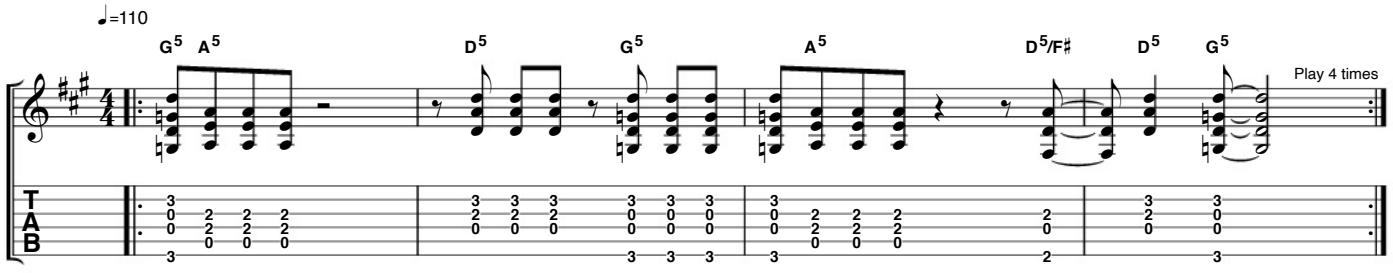

Very much the engine room of the band, Malcolm Young's sparse, driving rhythm guitar work is the core of AC/DC's sound. Our example is inspired by *Rock N Roll Train* and showcases Malcolm's 'less is more' approach. The open position powerchords ring out and the inherent sustain of open strings allows for less overdrive to be used.

8 AC/DC: ANGUS YOUNG-STYLE HIGH OCTANE LEAD

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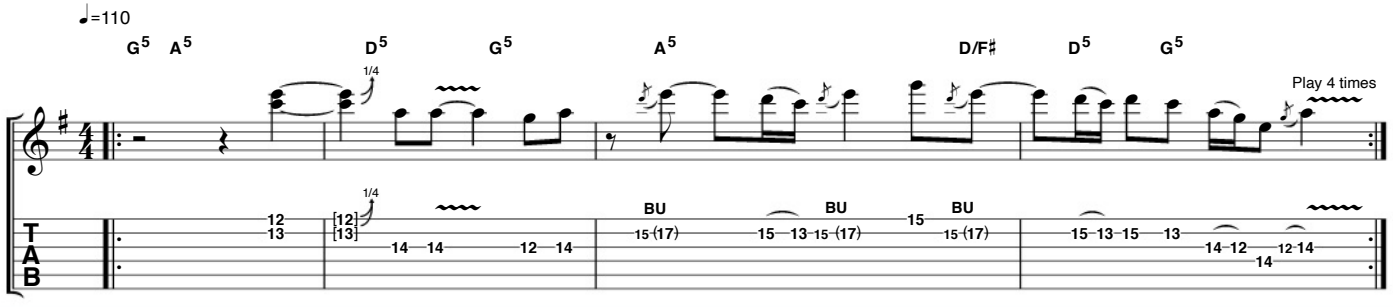

Here in our Angus Young-inspired lick we're using the trusty A minor pentatonic scale – as indeed Angus does. Played over the previous riff, this lead line begins in the gaps between the powerchords in a 'question and answer' style. It's typical AC/DC stuff and a great way to showcase the interplay between two guitars.

9 SLASH: UPTEMPO PENTATONICS

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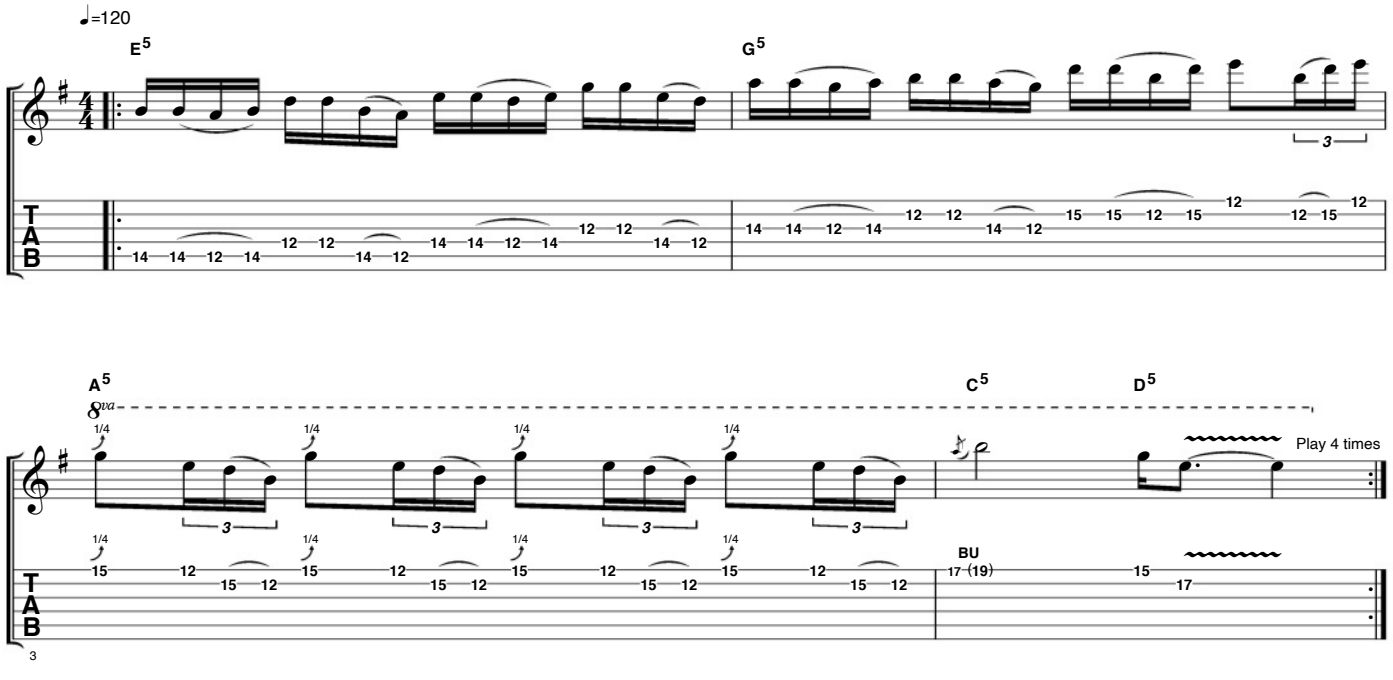

Like Angus Young, Slash is a heavy user of pentatonic scales. Our example is inspired by the outro solo in *Sweet Child O' Mine* and starts out with a cool way to break up the pentatonic scale for ascending runs. The first note is double-picked then followed by a pull-off, and the pattern is repeated up through the scale. The final repeating phrase in bar 3 is a classic and well worth practising slowly at first.

10 MARK KNOPFLER: QUESTION AND ANSWER PHRASING

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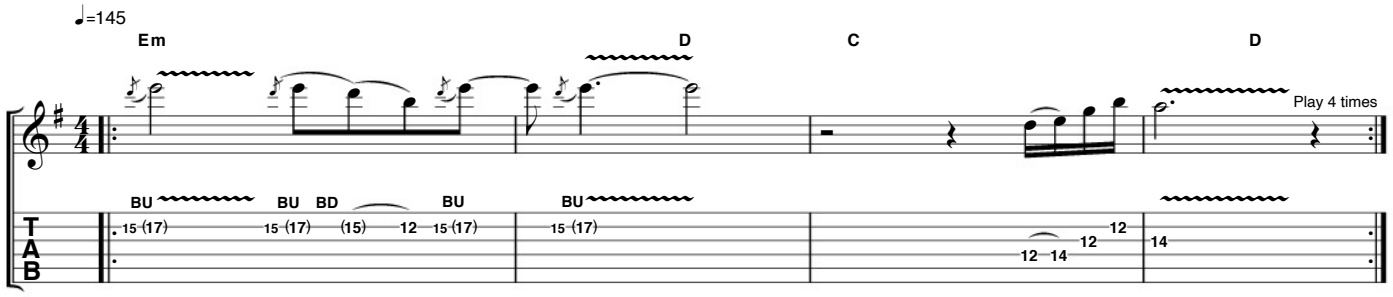

This Dire Straits style example is inspired by songs like *Lady Writer* and *Sultans Of Swing* where guitarist Mark Knopfler sings a phrase then follows up with a lead fill. The use of the fingers to pick the notes is an essential ingredient for the tone so pop your pick to one side for this one!

11 JOHNNY MARR: INDIE JANGLE

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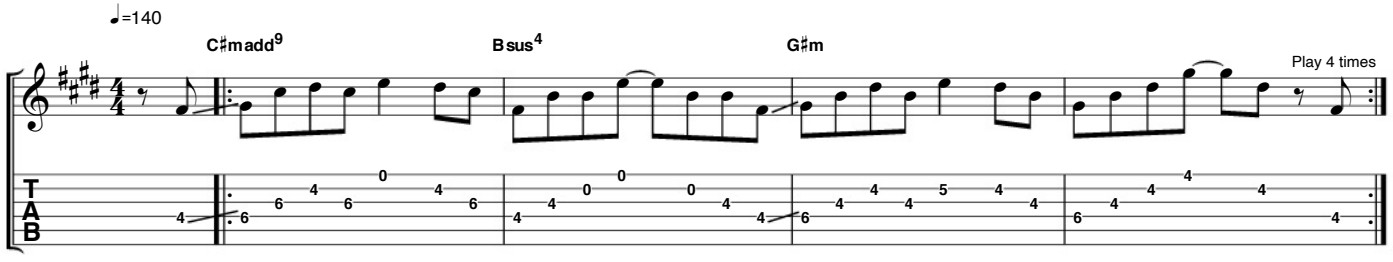

At a time when hair metal reigned supreme, guitarists like The Smiths' Johnny Marr provided an indie alternative. Johnny used ringing clean arpeggio lines and plenty of overdubs to create intricate soundscapes. Our example is inspired by tracks like *Some Girls Are Bigger Than Others* and utilises fast picking. Employing the ringing open strings where possible helps to provide that trademark jangle.

12 THE EDGE: DOTTED EIGHTH NOTE DELAYS

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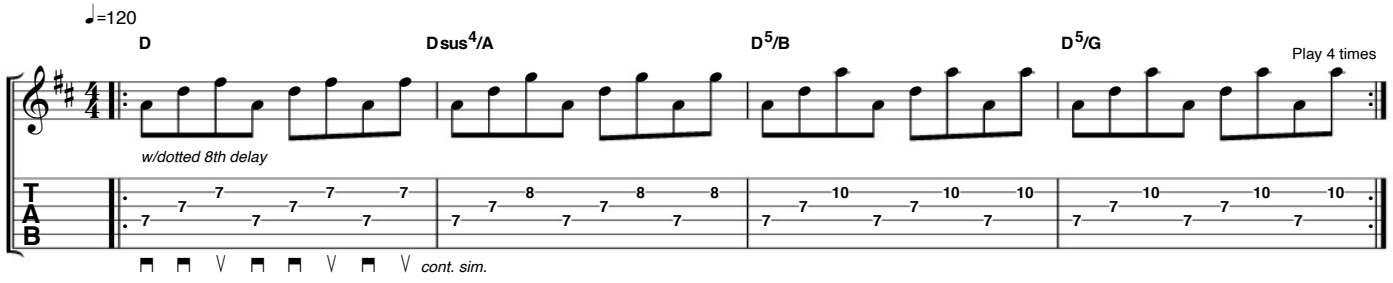

Inspired by classic U2 songs like *Where The Streets Have No Name* and *With Or Without You*, here we're recreating The Edge's trademark arpeggio soundscapes. At our riff's 120bpm tempo the delay time should be set to 375ms to create the dotted eighth-note rhythm. Keep the repeat volume high, preferably with a modulation effect added, and allow roughly six or seven repeats before the sound dies out. If you have a second delay pedal at your disposal, set it to 125bpm (a 16th note).

13 KURT COBAIN: PUNKY POWERCHORDS AND DISSONANCE

bit.ly/tg373audio

Grunge giants Nirvana changed the landscape of rock almost overnight, disposing with the excesses of high production 80s rock in favour of a more emotionally direct, alt-rock approach. Our example, inspired by *Smells Like Teen Spirit* and *Scentless Apprentice*, combines punky powerchords with a dissonant unison bend. In true Nirvana style this bend sounds most effective played slightly out of tune.

14 PEARL JAM: STONE GOSSARD-STYLE LAYERING

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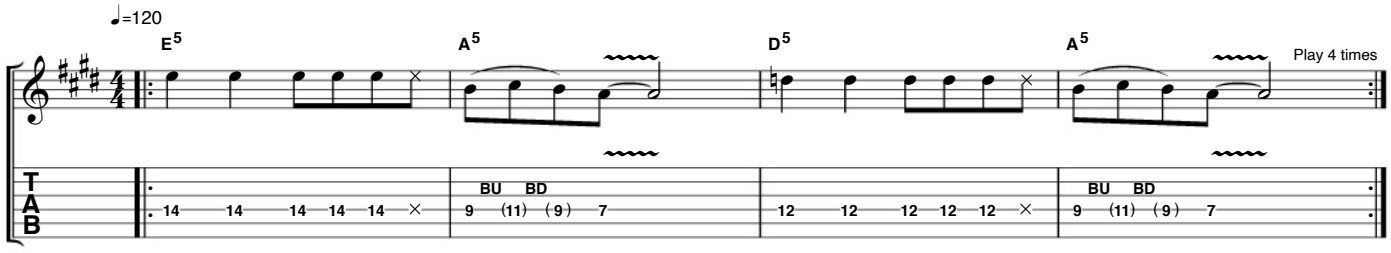

Grunge isn't really a musical genre – and Pearl Jam always sounded substantially different to Nirvana, taking more influence from classic 70s rock than punk and 80s alt bands. There are some really magical harmonies thanks to Stone Gossard and Mike McCready's layered guitars, and our example is inspired by songs like *Jeremy*, *Black* and *Alive* from the band's debut album *Ten*.

15 PEARL JAM: MIKE MCCREADY-STYLE LAYERING

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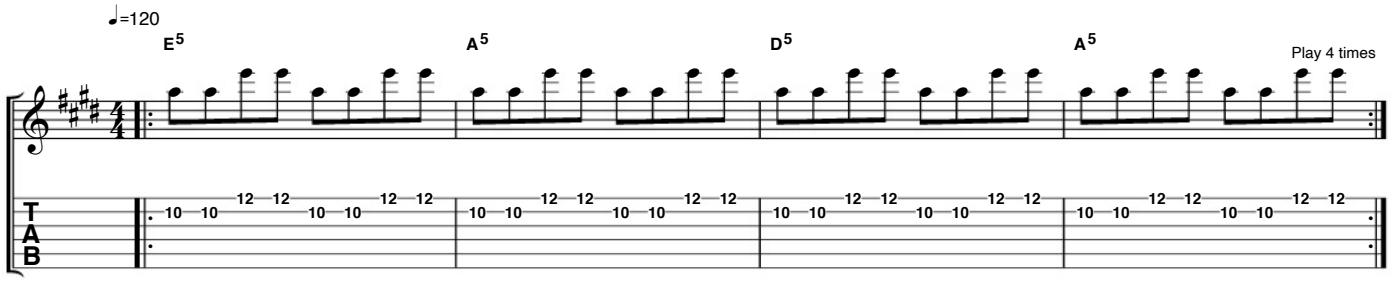

Building on our previous riff, here we add in extra layers using a simple four-note repeating pattern which can be played exclusively with downpicking.

16 TOM MORELLO: KILL SWITCH RIFF

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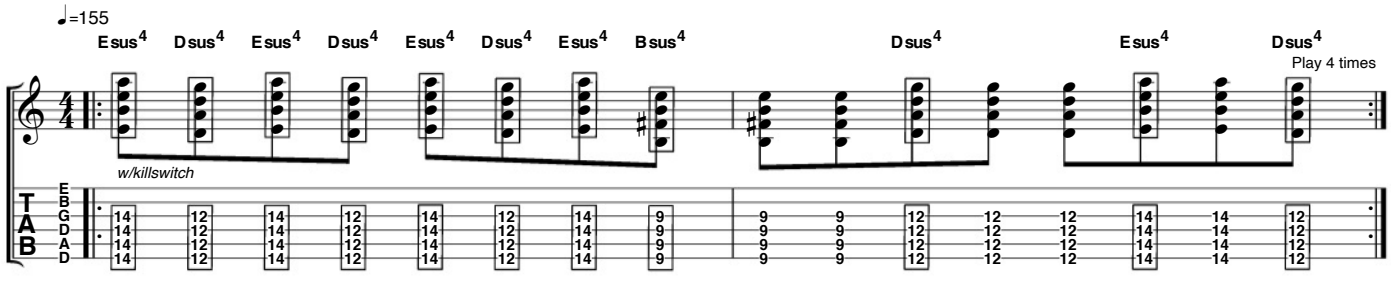
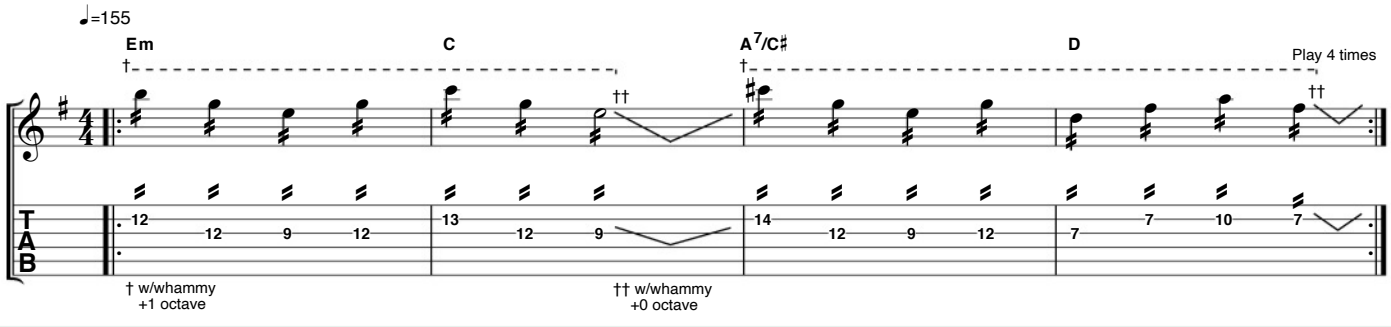


This riff is inspired by songs like Rage Against The Machine's *Know Your Enemy*, where a kill switch is employed to create rhythmic effects with a metronome-like stuttering quality. No kill switch? No problem! Use a two-pickup, two-volume-knob guitar (such as a Les Paul Standard), lower one volume knob and use the selector switch to toggle between the active and silent pickups.

17 MATT BELLAMY: NEO-CLASSICAL CHORD PROGRESSIONS

bit.ly/tg373audio



This classical style chord progression is a tried and tested Bellamy trick and you can hear similar ideas in Muse songs *New Born* and *Plug In Baby*. We're using a Whammy pedal set to one octave up (though you can practise without one) and playing tremolo picked arpeggios to outline the progression. There's an implied chromatic melody running through the progression, starting on a B note in the Em chord before following C, C♯ and D with the subsequent chords.

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KISS
DETROIT ROCK CITY

Get rocking with the epic powerchords and slick harmonies of Paul Stanley and Ace Frehley's 1976 twin-guitar classic

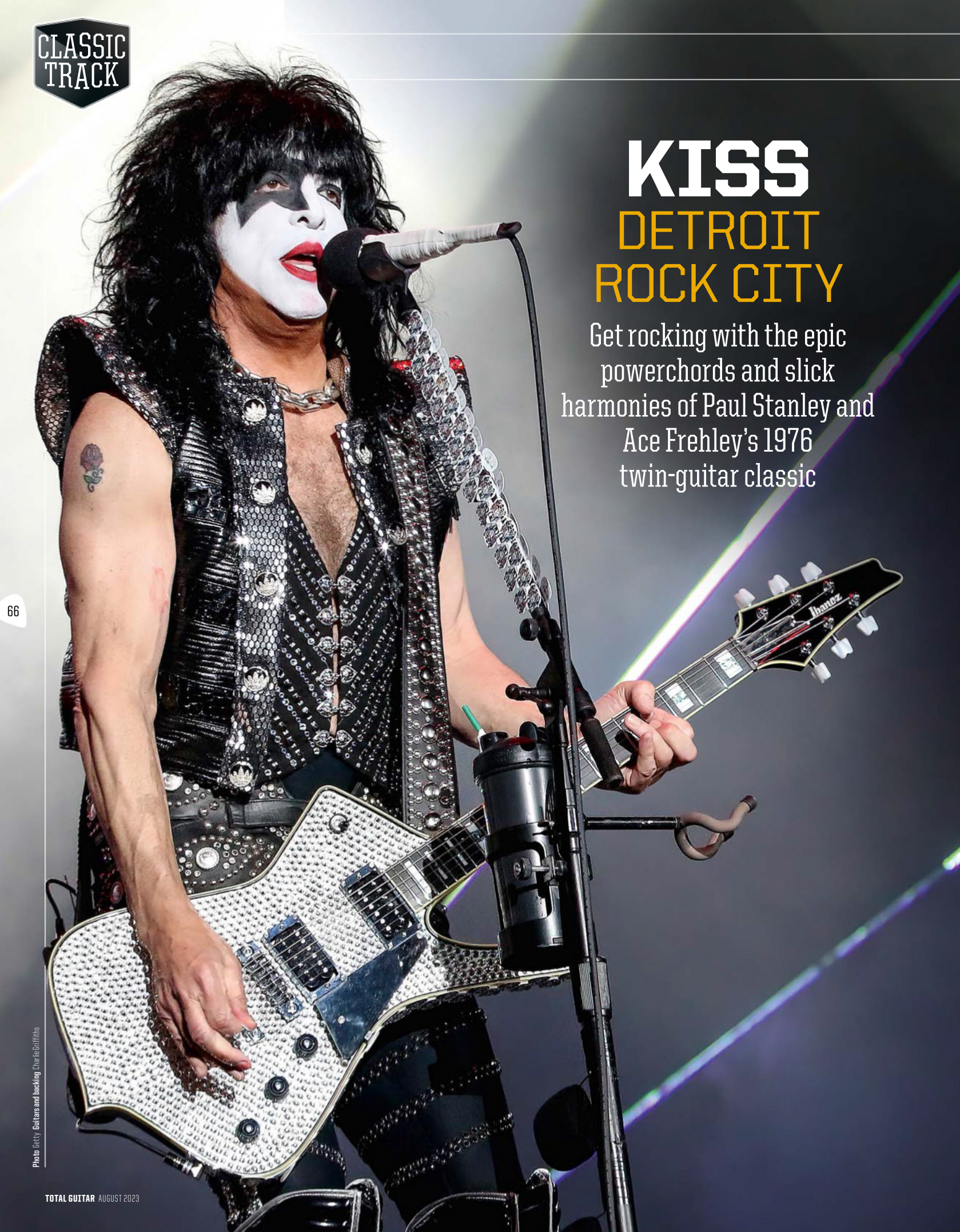


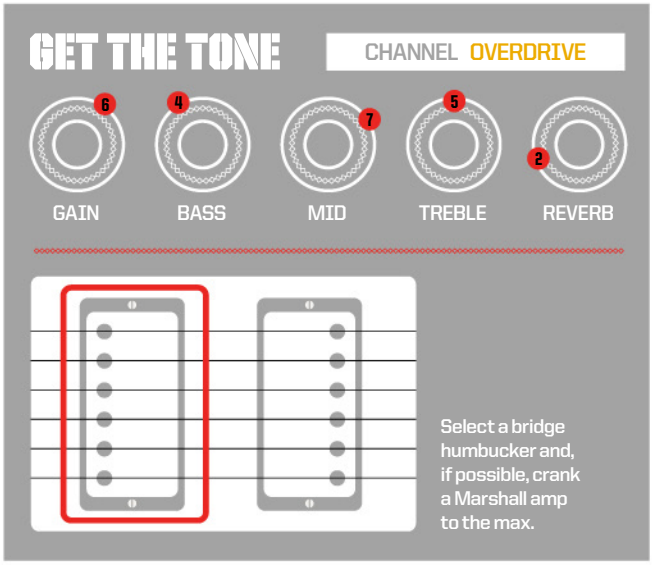
Photo Getty Guitars and backing Charlie Griffiths

Detroit Rock City co-writer Paul Stanley recently told TG: "It started with the riff and that became the incessant part of the song. With the riff you get that sense of release with the big powerchords." He's dead right, of course. Listen to *DRC*'s intro and you'll hear a guitar part gradually growing as single-note riffs give way to those huge A5 and B5 powerchords.

The track is played with a shuffle feel throughout and has an unusual structure, comprising four verses, an interlude riff, an extended twin-guitar solo, and a combined tag and chorus section. When you're playing the harmony lines, it's important to be absolutely tight with the other guitar, matching subtler nuances such as string bends and vibrato.

SOUND ADVICE

Everything you need to know before playing 'Detroit Rock City'



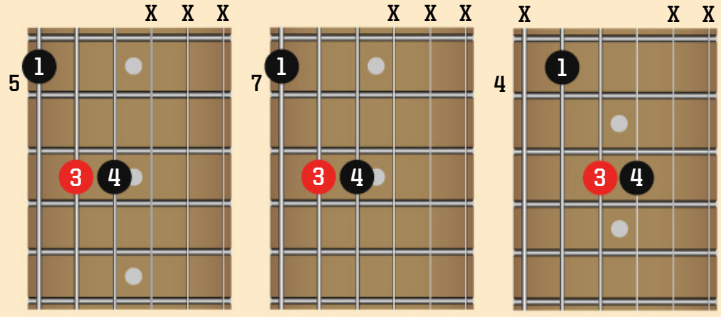
Live, Paul Stanley and Ace Frehley (then later Tommy Thayer) have used a few guitars over the years, but nearly all have been humbucker-loaded – and a Les Paul through a cranked Marshall amp is the ideal starting point. Discussing *Detroit Rock City*, Paul Stanley tells TG: "We're plugged from the guitar into the Marshall. That's it. If you're not getting that sound, you either need a new guitar or a new amp. Quite simply, it's in the fingers, it's in the guitar, and it's in the amp..."

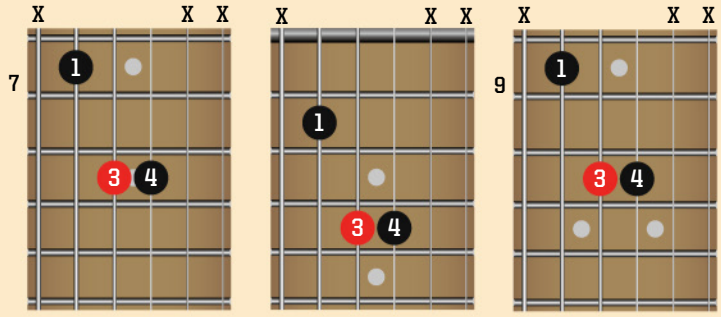
Useful info, for sure, but be aware that if you're not playing at stadium-conquering levels, a drive/distortion pedal may be useful for gain-boosting purposes, particularly during the solo, and Frehley is known to have used a Big Muff in his rig.

Note that the two harmonised guitars are doubled an octave higher on the recording, and you could certainly experiment with an octave pedal. Unless, of course, you're planning on jamming with three pals to play all four lines at once!

CHORDS

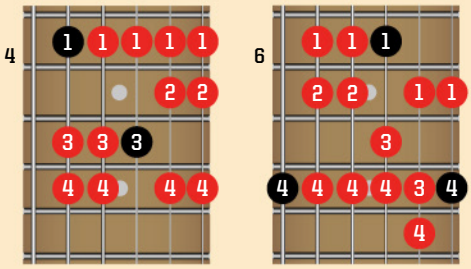
The chords are all simple powerchord shapes. Notice that there are two voicings of the B5 – the same shape, just played at different fret positions and built with root notes either on the fifth or sixth strings. Though definitely among the easiest chords you need to know it's worth noting that there are several idle strings in each shape – and these need to be muted out. Rest your fretting fingers gently against the adjacent strings to achieve this.

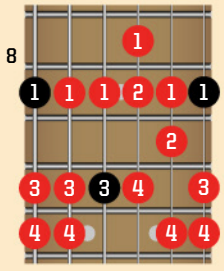




SCALES

The solo licks are based in these three natural minor scale shapes. Practise the scales and you'll gain a better understanding of how to manage the position shifts in the solo.





KISS
DETROIT ROCK CITY

FULL TAB

DETROIT ROCK CITY
Words and Music by Paul Stanley and Bob Ezrin
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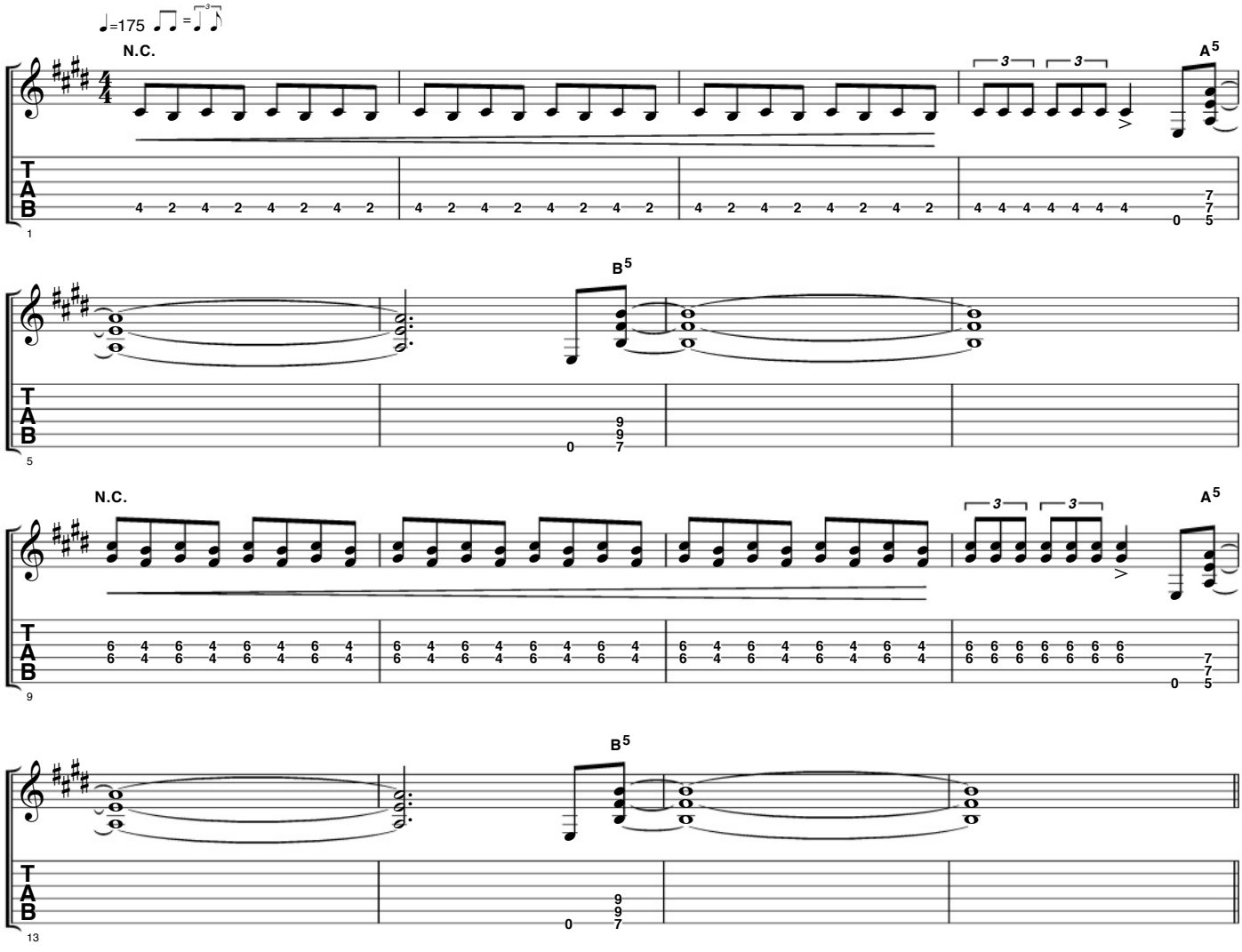
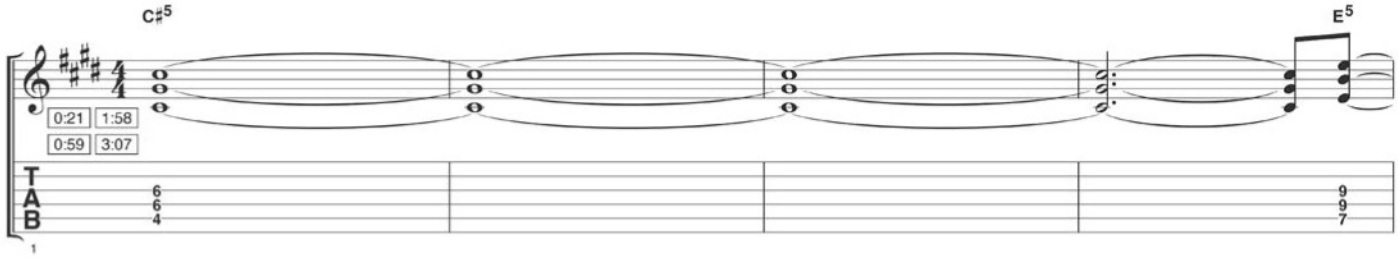
KISS DETROIT ROCK CITY Intro **bit.ly/tg373audio**

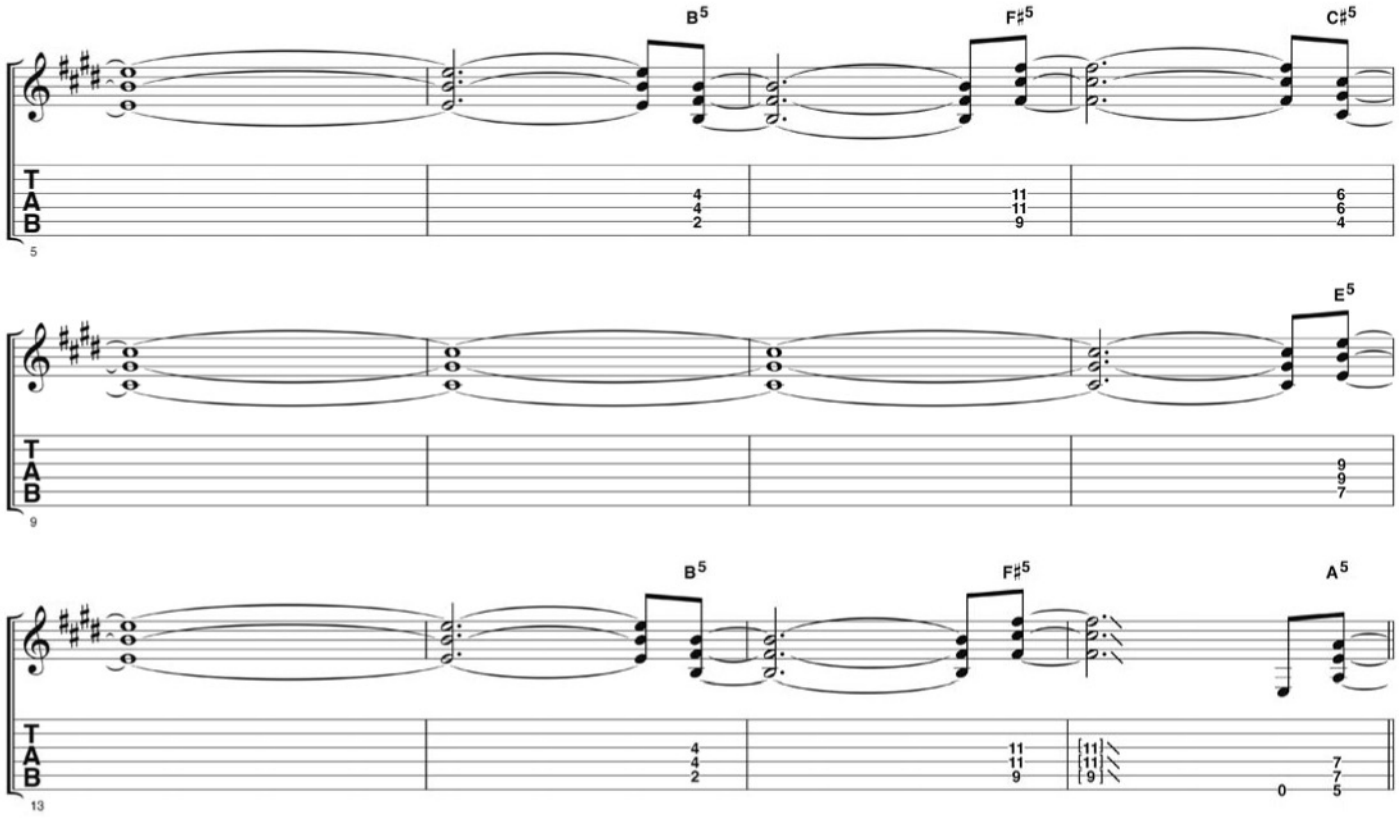


Start by picking the string very lightly using just the tip of your pick. Gradually increase the intensity by picking slightly harder with each note and digging in with more of the pick. You should be at maximum volume when you reach bar 4.

KISS DETROIT ROCK CITY Verse **bit.ly/tg373audio**

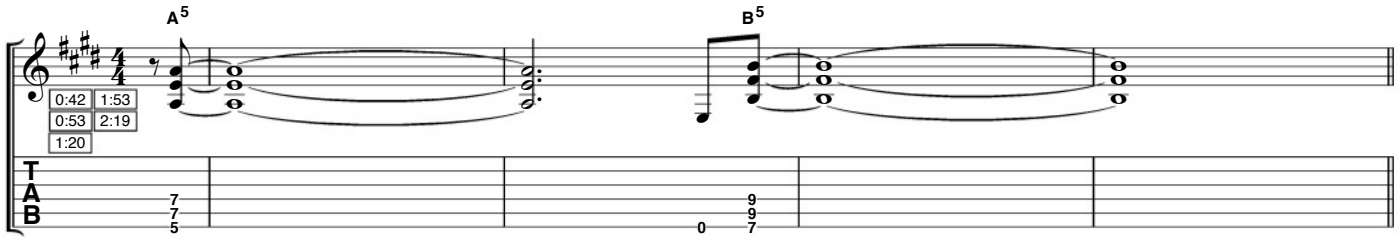


KISS DETROIT ROCK CITY **Verse (cont'd)** **bit.ly/tg373audio**



Use your first finger on the fifth string, with your third finger barring across the third and fourth strings. During verse 4, Ace barres across the second string with his third finger, too. The section has a 'pushed' feel, meaning that the chords change just before the bar lines.

KISS DETROIT ROCK CITY **Tag** **bit.ly/tg373audio**



We've called this simple section the 'tag' because it gets tagged on to the end of almost every section of the song. The tag is played five times in total and follows verses 1, 2 and 3, the chorus and the interlude.

KISS DETROIT ROCK CITY **Chorus** **bit.ly/tg373audio**

One of the unusual things about this track is that the chorus is played only once. Notice the staccato dots over some of the quarter notes (crotchets). Cut these notes short by lifting your fretting finger slightly, releasing the string from the fret and thereby muting the string.

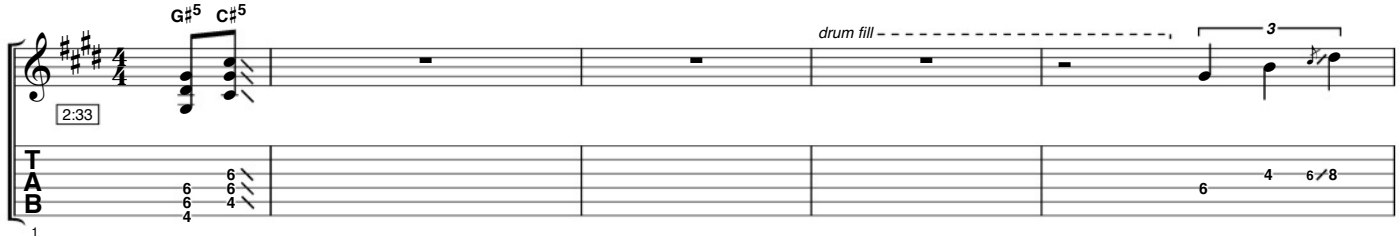
KISS DETROIT ROCK CITY Interlude

bit.ly/tg373audio

The quarter-tone bend (shown with an arrow and a 1/4 symbol) is a technique commonly applied to the minor 3rd note of the minor pentatonic scale. Use your first finger to slightly pull the fourth string down towards the floor. Keep the bend slow and be careful not to bend too far.

KISS DETROIT ROCK CITY Solo

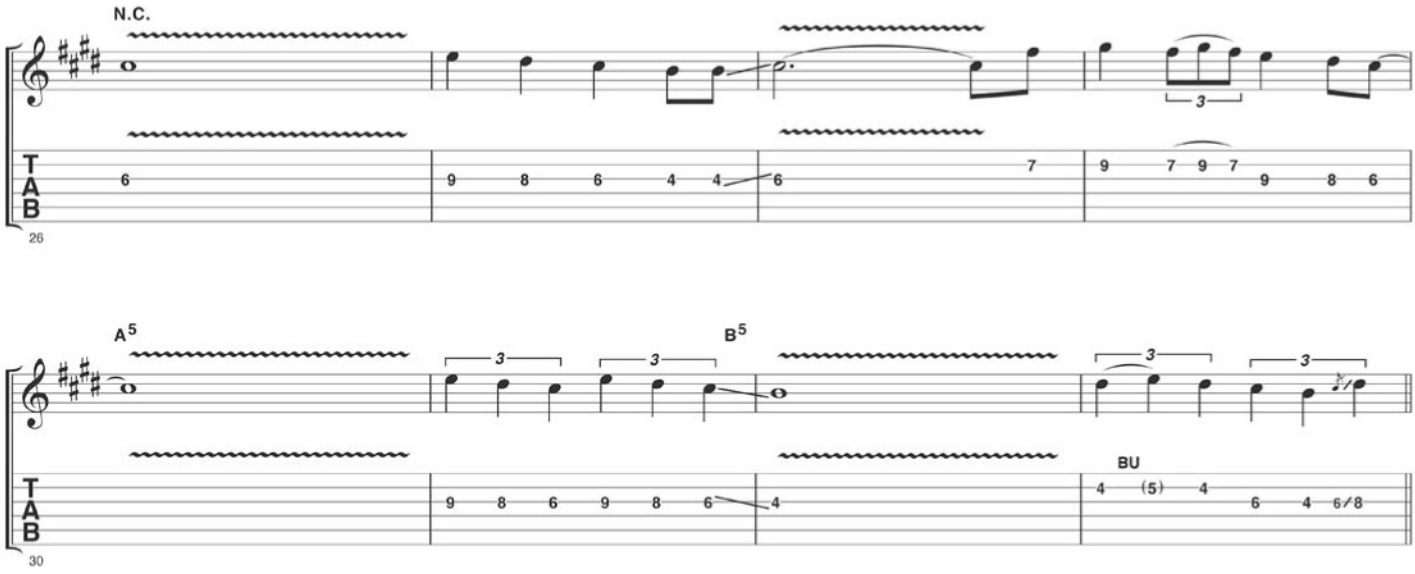
bit.ly/tg373audio



KISS DETROIT ROCK CITY **Solo** **bit.ly/tg373audio**

KISS DETROIT ROCK CITY Solo (cont'd)

bit.ly/tg373audio



The recording features two guitars playing in harmony. We've tabbed an amalgamation of the two parts. When you're playing along to the backing track, pay special attention to mimicking the speed and depth of vibrato of the harmony part.

KISS DETROIT ROCK CITY Outro

bit.ly/tg373audio

This outro is an extended version of the 'tag' riff seen earlier, and additionally has a similar twin-guitar harmony part to the solo section. We have combined the rhythm guitar and one of the harmony parts into a single playable part.

OUR GENERATION
Tom Ford plays **Top Tape** flatwound electric guitar strings:
in production and used on era-defining records since 1961
ROTOSOUND®
@rotosound_uk

OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

BLACK SUMMER

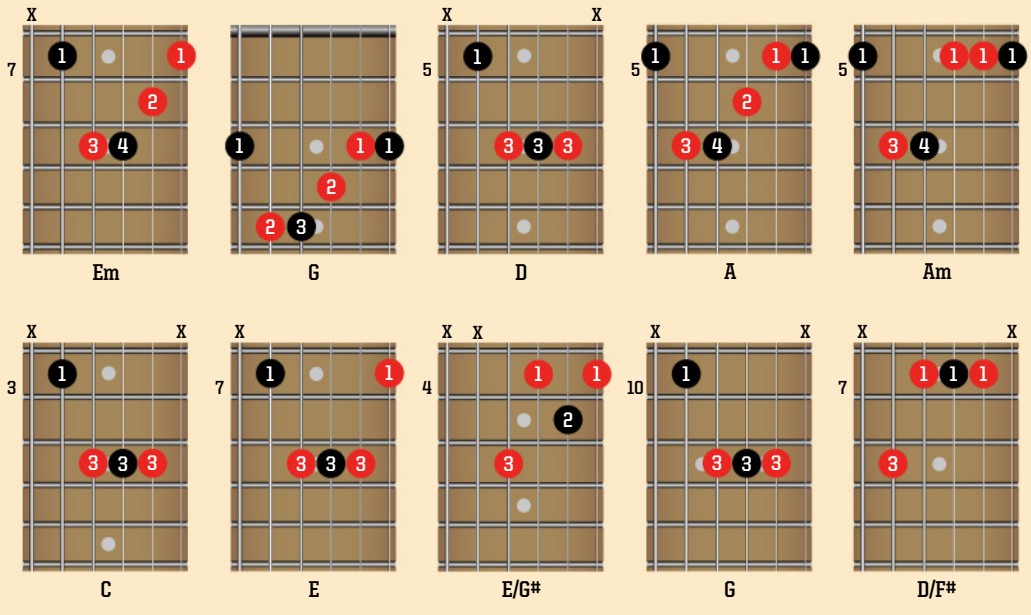
2022's comeback track from the Chilis has it all: a barre chord workout, cool intro licks and Hendrix-like doublestops

Formed in 1982, the LA funk-rock foursome have sold over 120 million records, making them one of the biggest-selling bands of all time. Anthony Kiedis (vocals) and Flea (bass) are founding members, with drummer Chad Smith joining in 1988 and guitarist John Frusciante now in his third stint with the band since his return to the fold in 2019.

This month's track *Black Summer* sees Frusciante on top form, delivering Hendrix-esque rhythm parts from a Strat neck pickup (usually his Fiesta Red '61 model in live shows) with some delicious modulation, likely from his trusty Boss CE-1 chorus pedal. The song works on various levels, with John taking a Jimi-style diad and funk-lite barre-chord approach but with a progression that could easily be reimagined with folky open chords on a steel-string acoustic. We've tabbed a few bars of John's diads, and the chords you need are below.

CHORDS

We've illustrated the chords that Frusciante plays on the original track, but any (or all) could be replaced with open chords for a folkier vibe. E/G# and D/F# are inversions, so their root notes are not the lowest in pitch. A standard E or D chord will work if you prefer – the bass guitar plays the G# and F# notes anyway. Note that the original track was recorded in E♭ standard tuning, but we've recorded our version in E so you can get stuck in without the faff.



'BLACK SUMMER'
Words and Music by Anthony Kiedis, Flea, Chad Smith and John Frusciante
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Guitars and backing Phil Capone **Photo** Meredith Truax

Backing track (bit.ly/tg373audio)
This song comes with a full backing track. Enter the above link into your web browser of choice; press play and jam along, guitaraoke style!

SONGSHEET

Black Summer

Intro
Em / / / x4

Verse 1
Em G D A Em
A lazy rain am I, the skies refuse to cry
Am Em D G D
Cremation takes its piece of your supply
Em G
The night is dressed like noon
D A Em
A sailor spoke too soon
Am Em D G D
And China's on the dark side of the moon

Interlude 1
C G D E G A E

Verse 2
Em G D A Em
Platypus are a few, the secret life of roo
Am Em D G D
A personality I never knew
Em G
My Greta weighs a ton
D A Em
The archers on the run
Am Em D G E/G#
And no one stands alone behind the sun

Chorus
C G
It's been a long time
D E
Since I made a new friend
G A E
Waitin' on another black summer to end
C G
It's been a long time
D E
And you never know when
D A E
Waitin' on another black summer to end

Solo
Em G D Em Am Em G D
Em G D Em Am Em G / E/G# /

Bridge
Em G
Crack the flaming whip
D A Em
A-sailin' on a censorship
Am Em
Riding on a headless horse
D G D/F#
To make the trip

Repeat chorus

Interlude 2
Em G D Em

Outro
Am Em
I been waitin', I been waitin'
D A
Waitin' on another black summer to end
Em G
I been waitin', I been waitin'
D Em
Waitin' on another black summer to end
Am Em
I been waitin', I been waitin'
D
Waitin' on another black summer
A Em
To e—e—end

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS BLACK SUMMER Intro **bit.ly/tg373audio**

Hold down the Em barre chord until you reach bar 4, but watch out for the hammer-ons in bar 2 where you'll need to lift a finger then re-fret. The diad slide that opens bar 4 is tricky to play using the Em chord fingering so use either your first and second or second and third fingers. Pick softly throughout for a relaxed, mellow performance.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS BLACK SUMMER Interlude 1 **bit.ly/tg373audio**

The key to getting these Hendrix-style doublestops to sound fluent is to keep both notes fretted while you hammer on the lower (bars 1 and 3) or higher (bar 4) notes. The notes should ring for their full value, so you'll need to change shapes quickly.

THE GAS STATION

REAL WORLD REVIEWS OF THE BEST NEW GEAR

Welcome to the GAS (Gear Acquisition Syndrome*) Station! Every issue, TG scours the market for the hottest new gear and brings you transparent reviews that you can trust. From the smallest of accessories that make your life easier, to big investments, such as brand new guitars, amps and effects pedals – if it's worth your attention, you'll find it here!

HOW WE TEST

CURATION
Our product selection is driven by our love of gear. We select the most exciting products on the market every month to bring you opinions you can trust.

FACE-VALUE REVIEWS
We're not gear snobs here at *Total Guitar*. We judge it on whether it looks good, sounds good and plays well – not by the name on the headstock.

***WHAT IS GAS?**
Gear Acquisition Syndrome is the guitar-player's never-ending urge to acquire new gear, irrespective of whether they actually need it. Don't pretend you don't have it – we all do!

NO SNAKE OIL
You won't find us getting hung up on hokey mythology or nonsense marketing speak: we aim to bring you bullsh*t-free opinions on the gear you're interested in.

WE CAN'T BE BOUGHT
TG review scores are a true reflection of our experts' opinion on the product they've been testing. You'll never find a rating in our mag that has been bought and paid for.

REAL WORLD REVIEWS
We test every product under the conditions that they were designed for. For example, if an amp is designed to be played loud, rest assured that we'll have tested it at rehearsal/gig volumes!

BEST BUY AWARD
TG Best Buy Awards are reserved for stand-out products that earn a 4.5 star overall rating. This is the most exciting new gear that you *need* to check out

PLATINUM AWARD
Reserved for the very best of the best, TG's Platinum Awards are given to class-leading, gamechanging products that score a maximum 5 stars in every category.

SUPERB, A BEST BUY | EXCELLENT | ABOVE AVERAGE KIT | SOME ISSUES | POOR

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88 EVH 5150 ICONIC SERIES 15W 1X10 COMBO
EVH expand their Iconic series with this compact yet powerful combo

90 IK MULTIMEDIA TONEX PEDAL
Now you can take your TONEX Tone Models to the stage

92 TWO NOTES REVOLT GUITAR
The master of speaker emulation turns its hand to analogue amp sim pedals

94 APOGEE JAM X
A solid mobile interface with built-in compression and bite

1

5

3

4

2

START ME UP!

Five awesome new products to get your gear engine revving this month...

POSITIVE GRID BIAS FX 2

1 Good news if you already own PG's modelling plugin and standalone software: its huge new update is free. For the rest of us it's a great excuse to invest in its overhauled DSP sound engine for ten of the key amp models. The Cabs 3.0 element also includes 10 new custom IRs, alongside an improved UI for building signal chains via drag-and-drop. Guitar Match II also allows you to now model classic acoustic guitars and basses as well as electrics.

From $69 (update free for existing users)
www.positivegrid.com

MUSICNOMAD L-BEAM FRET LEVELLER AND TRI-BEAM 3 N' 1 STRAIGHT EDGE

2 Experiencing choking or buzz from your frets? You could have high spots on them. These two new tools from US guitar tools brand MusicNomad will help you diagnose trouble spots on the fretboard with the straight edge and scale length ruler (available in a notched option, too) and begin addressing them with the sanding fret leveller before dressing with a specialist file.

Tri-Beam from $34.99
L-Beam from $34.99
www.musicnomad.com

GAMECHANGER AUDIO BIGSBY

3 This Latvian company really lives up to its name; it hasn't just used a SHARC audio processor to create an uncanny real-time string-bending Bigsby effect in a pedal, but the team has also included chorus, tremolo, harmoniser, octaver and up to 12 semitone pitch-shifts in both directions. There's full MIDI CC for control and presets and it's a sturdy build, too, that won't put your guitar out of tune after you stop using it!

£339
www.gamechangeraudio.com

TC ELECTRONIC INFINITE MINI SAMPLE SUSTAINER

4 John Mayer had the full-size version on one of his (three) pedalboards during his recent US solo tour, so it must be good. But what does it do? Well, it allows you to create infinitely-sustaining guitar sounds to play over or just marvel at... surprising, eh? Players can combine layers of sustain with a controllable Fade in rate and fade out with the Decay knob. You can also download presets via the TonePrint app if you're looking for new inspiration.

£109
www.tcelectronic.com

KIESEL SOPHIE LLOYD SL6

5 Kiesel's first female signature artist is UK shredder and Machine Gun Kelly's touring guitarist Sophie Lloyd. "Kiesel took me on when I barely had a thousand followers – it's been amazing to grow with them and become part of the family," says Lloyd. Features for the SL6 included a chambered black limba body and 24-fret 14" radius thin neck profile, plus a walnut neck, and customisable options available to players to select, including a Sustainiac pickup.

From $2,699
www.kieselguitars.com

GIBSON KIRK HAMMETT 'GREENY' LES PAUL STANDARD £2,999

The latest chapter in the tall tales of this most storied of guitars

Easily one of the most famous guitars ever, the 1959 Gibson Les Paul played by Peter Green, then for much longer by Gary Moore and now owned by Kirk Hammett, is the stuff of legend. Inspired by Eric Clapton's famous use of the Les Paul with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, Peter Green – who briefly replaced Clapton in Mayall's lineup – bought his Les Paul in London in, it's believed, 1965, '66 or '67 depending on whose account you read. It's believed to be the guitar Peter used on his only album with John Mayall, *Hard Road*, released in 1967. Leaving Mayall that same year and forming Fleetwood Mac, it was on their eponymous first album, released in 1968, that the nasally 'Peter Green sound' emerged on tracks like *Merry Go Round*, then more famously on *Need Your Love So Bad* and *Black Magic Woman*, released as singles later in that year.

> "ITS RAW VIBE MAKES IT ONE OF THE BEST WE'VE PLAYED"

What exactly had happened to the guitar is as mythical as the instrument itself. One theory is that because Clapton only used the bridge pickup on his Les Paul, Green decided to remove (or have removed) the neck pickup. Others believe the neck pickup was faulty and needed repairing. When it was re-installed on the guitar (the wrong way around with the screw poles facing the bridge) it was out-of-phase, producing a nasally sound when both pickups are combined. That had little to do with the wrong placement but the fact that the bar magnet was flipped, which switched the magnetic polarity, during the alleged repair. Yet another theory is that it had left the Gibson factory like that – plenty of 'Burst owners, not least Joe Bonamassa, have experienced totally stock Les Pauls from the famed 1958-60 period that have the same out-of-phase mistake. Gary Moore got much more use out of the guitar after he'd purchased it in the early 70s, but he eventually sold in it 2006.

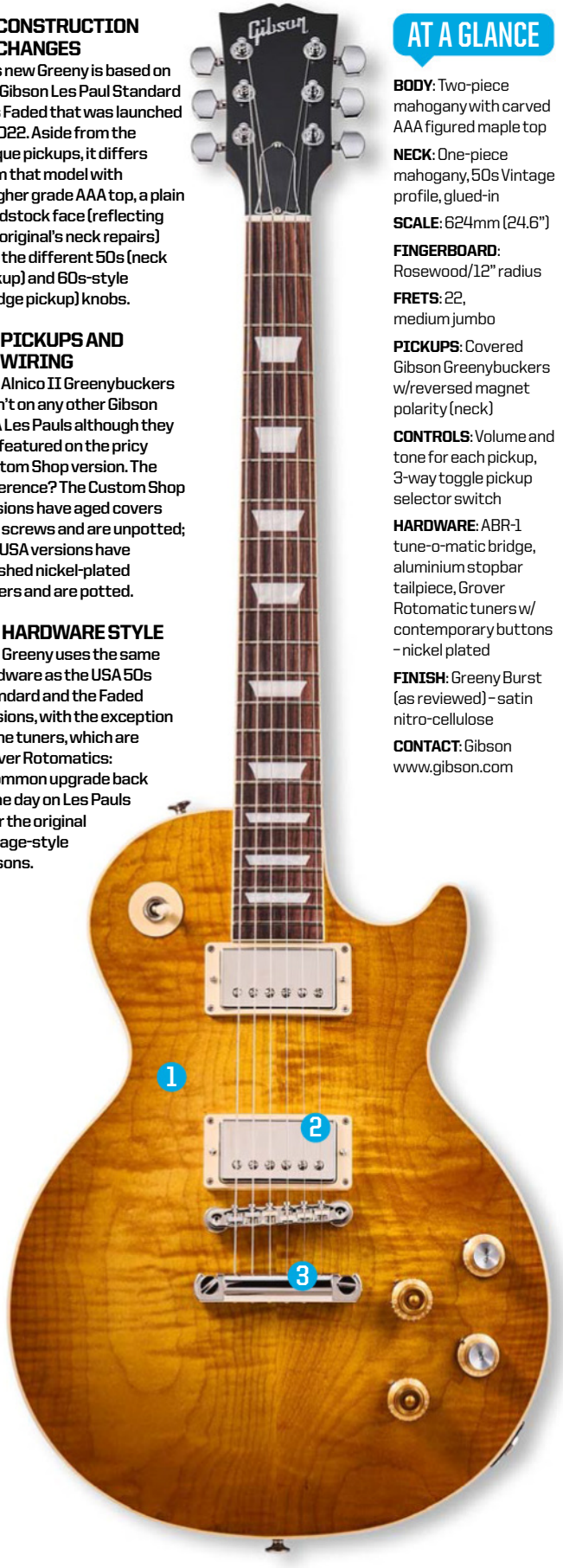
Kirk Hammett purchased the guitar in 2017, and it's that 60-something year old guitar that was originally cloned by the Gibson Custom shop in 2022. The current, second version will set you back a cool £19k, and now by Gibson USA's production division: the guitar you see here.

Based on the satin nitro finished Les Paul Standard 50s Faded, it's not aged, but due to the very thin finish, coloured only on the top, it'll certainly age fast over a few gigs. In places it feels a little unfinished – there's a noticeable ridge along the side of the neck where the fingerboard binding has been scraped; likewise around the body and the binding here is left rather sharp-edged. That aside, the build is very tidy, and our sample is a good weight at 8.8lbs

1 CONSTRUCTION CHANGES
This new Greeny is based on the Gibson Les Paul Standard 50s Faded that was launched in 2022. Aside from the unique pickups, it differs from that model with a higher grade AAA top, a plain headstock face (reflecting the original's neck repairs) and the different 50s (neck pickup) and 60s-style (bridge pickup) knobs.

2 PICKUPS AND WIRING
The Alnico II Greenybuckers aren't on any other Gibson USA Les Pauls although they are featured on the pricy Custom Shop version. The difference? The Custom Shop versions have aged covers and screws and are unpotted; the USA versions have polished nickel-plated covers and are potted.

3 HARDWARE STYLE
Greeny uses the same hardware as the USA 50s Standard and the Faded versions, with the exception of the tuners, which are Grover Rotomatics: a common upgrade back in the day on Les Pauls over the original vintage-style Klusons.



AT A GLANCE

BODY: Two-piece mahogany with carved AAA figured maple top

NECK: One-piece mahogany, 50s Vintage profile, glued-in

SCALE: 624mm (24.6")

FINGERBOARD: Rosewood/12" radius

FRETS: 22, medium jumbo

PICKUPS: Covered Gibson Greenybuckers w/reversed magnet polarity (neck)

CONTROLS: Volume and tone for each pickup, 3-way toggle pickup selector switch

HARDWARE: ABR-1 tune-o-matic bridge, aluminium stopbar tailpiece, Grover Rotomatic tuners w/ contemporary buttons – nickel plated

FINISH: Greeny Burst (as reviewed) – satin nitro-cellulose

CONTACT: Gibson www.gibson.com

Photography Olly Curtis

Going out-of-phase

Can you turn your Les Paul into Greeny?

Yes! Flipping the magnet in a humbucker to reverse its polarity may not be a job for novices, but if you're handy with a soldering iron and a screwdriver it's not too difficult. If you have a humbucker with four-conductor hook-up wire you can electrically reverse the phase. It's subtly different, but as on the current Gibson Les Paul Classic with its phase switch, you can get very close to *that* sound. Plenty of pickup makers offer their own 'Greeny' set: Bare Knuckle's PG Blues takes the repaired neck pickup route with classic PAF-like outputs, while Monty's Bethnal Green set are modelled on the evaluation of Greeny's pickups before it was sold to Kirk and are "hotter than expected". There are plenty to choose from…

without any chambering or weight relief. There's a very boutique-like feel to the neck back where you can feel the grain of the mahogany, almost like bare wood, and it uses the fuller and rounder 50s vintage profile.

Running Greeny through its paces, a slight surprise is that the pickups are quite pokey – pretty close we'd say to the Burstbucker Types 2 and 3 – used individually. The bridge is classic Slash, for example, while the neck is beautifully vocal and full. Now, slot the toggle into its middle position and everything changes: there's a big volume drop, the sound is thin and nasally but as each pickup has its own volume and tone control. Just pulling back the bridge volume, for example, the pickups become less out-of-phase with each other and the sound, while still having a little of that nasal character, is much fuller-sounding – that's the key to the Peter Green sound, the uneven setting of the volumes, and to a lesser extent, the tone controls.

A little more expensive than the gloss-finished 50s Standard and some £700 more than the current Faded version, it certainly won't be for everyone. That said, the individual pickup sounds are great. That mixed position is certainly more than useful, not least to track parts on a recording, and it sounds particularly nasty with a fuzz box.

While most of us will hold out for an Epiphone version, which hasn't been officially announced (though both Kirk Hammett and Gibson brands' President and Interim CEO, Cesar Gueikian, have alluded to it), these Faded Les Pauls have a special raw and resonant vibe, and Greeny is without doubt the best sounding one we've played. A guitar to make your own story with?

Dave Burrluck

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★★
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★☆
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★☆
PLAYBILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

ALSO TRY...

VINTAGE REISSUED SERIES V100PGM £549

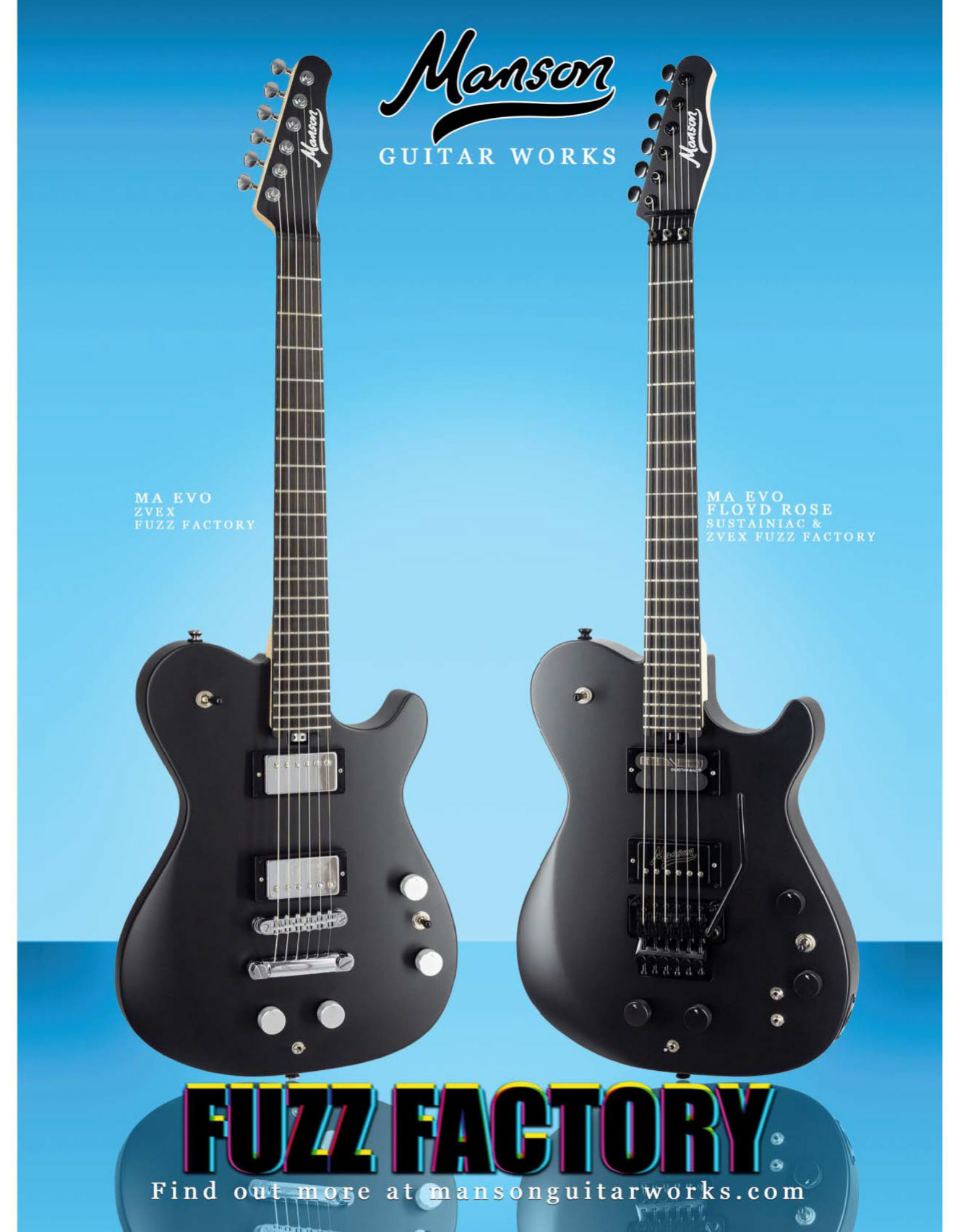
Vintage's version of Greeny comes in a faded Lemon Drop finish, and features those mis-matched control knobs, plus a pair of covered Wilkinson WVC humbuckers. The neck pickup is wired out of phase.

EPIPHONE 1959 LES PAUL STANDARD £769

This Andertons exclusive is an upgraded Les Paul with a magnet flip and an aged finish that'll keep you going until we get an actual Epiphone Greeny.

EPIPHONE LES PAUL CLASSIC £589

This affordable Epi features the classic look of a late 50s Standard and comes with Alnico 'buckers, CTS electronics, coil-splitting and phase switching, plus Grover machine heads.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Words Alex Lynham Photography Olly Curtis

WALRUS AUDIO FUNDAMENTAL SERIES

Walrus enter the affordable pedal market with a new, visually striking range. How do they sound?

Known as a boutique pedal company, Walrus Audio have been repositioning themselves in the mould of Earthquaker Devices. That is, no longer a pure boutique outfit, but rather a mainstream operation with some quirky options to consider. Their recent pedals have backed this, with more ambitious circuits and DSP work that requires greater up-front R&D and investment. The Fundamental series very much represents the other side of this coin. Where the Mako series are the high-end, high-effort pedals, the Fundamental series are simple, entry-level pedals. Here, Walrus have leaned on their extensive pedal building experience to create a product line that consolidates that knowledge. In the process, they've also bested many of the major manufacturers on price.

Every pedal in the Fundamental series has a streamlined interface of three slider controls and a Mode switch. According to Walrus, this is to make them more accessible to newer players. We'd suggest it's unlikely that your average player wouldn't understand each pedal if it had a different layout. Then again, it is at least visually satisfying to have consistency across the range. The fact that each pedal has up to three modes does mean that players are encouraged to experiment to some degree. There are only so many settings on each pedal so there's less fear of changing the settings and forgetting a cool sound you've dialled in.

Currently there are eight pedals in the line, covering the main sounds that you would likely find on most standard pedalboards. There are no weirdo effects or experimental units represented in the series, presumably to keep prices affordable and prevent diverting attention away from the company's more specialist higher-end units. Read on as we take a look at a quartet of pedals from the series and find out if the Fundamentals succeed in going back to basics…

DRIVE

Driving them wild

£95

The Fundamental Drive has three modes: soft clipping, soft clipping with added hard clipping, and the same with a bass cut. On the sliders, you can control the expected parameters of gain, tone and volume. Walrus cut their teeth on a large range of drives, many of them clones, in unique enclosures. As a result, they've got a pretty encyclopedic range of distortions and drives that they could draw on for inspiration here. It's surprising then that this TL072 based drive is perhaps a little vanilla. It certainly gets the job done, but there's not the open, transparent push of a Timmy, or the compression of a Tube Screamer or RAT. It's got enough volume gain to push a tube amp into saturation, but its actual gain range, even in the hard clipping mode is not that wide.

The bright setting is a little brash, and you may need to dial back the treble on a particularly bright amp. The smooth mode is solid for low-gain licks, especially with the guitar tone knob pulled back. The crunch mode's hard clipping is great for lead licks, but can be a little bit scratchy for chord playing, and we found it needed a bit of a push in the low mids. The tone control is a low-pass filter, which makes sense as a slider. Then again, the result is a less useful parameter for adjustment, given treble only needs serious taming in one mode.

The result is a decent drive pedal, but it's hard to not see it as a missed opportunity. Walrus have some excellent boost pedals like the Emissary in their lineup, as well as modded RAT-types like the Iron Horse. If only they could have used those winners as the basis here.

AT A GLANCE

CONTROLS: Gain, Tone, Vol

MODES: Smooth, Crunch, Bright

POWER: 9V DC Centre-negative

BYPASS: Buffered bypass

CHORUS

Chorus of approval

£125

The Fundamental Chorus is standard stuff at first glance, with rate, depth and mix on the front panel. The modes are where the fun is, with an analogue chorus, an analogue chorus with additional taps for more modulation, and an emulation of the LCR tri-chorus. All of the modes are very usable, with the first and third perhaps of most interest. As you move between them, a general rule is that the effect becomes more dramatic, so pulling the mix back is necessary. Although it's a different beast, the analogue emulation means that for the first two modes we're comparing to units like the TC June 60 and BOSS DC-2.

Like those units, we suspect that this would be pretty decent on keyboards or analogue synths. The chorus is rich and easy to tame via the mix control, but it's also worth saying that it's not very analogue sounding. There's little of the roll off and warble that you might expect, but that doesn't mean the tone or voicing is bad. Instead it's more a case of looking to its strengths. As a more pristine sound, it stacks better than some pure analogue units.

Moreover, chorus is an effect type where sliders make a lot of sense, as compared to, say, delay. Our rule of thumb has always been that a good effect inspires you to write riffs from the second you plug it in, and that was true here. The only thing we'd say negatively is that the range of the controls was such that we often had them almost at one end or the other, rather than in the middle. That may well just reflect our taste. Alternatively, it suggests that either more modes or tweaked parameters would open up even more options.

AT A GLANCE

CONTROLS: Rate, Depth, Mix

MODES: Light, Medium, Heavy

POWER: 9V DC Centre-negative

BYPASS: Buffered bypass

DELAY
Echoes of brilliance

£125

There are few surprises on this pedal in terms of the feature set. There are three modes, with digital, analog, reverse, and the standard time, feedback and mix parameters controlled by the sliders. The digital mode is the default digital delay sound, pristine and with no high-frequency roll-off on the repeats. Especially at higher feedback and mix settings, there are, granted, some interesting experimental sounds that can be coaxed out of the pedal. On the whole, it offers a glassy and pristine sound.

The analog mode is a better starting point, as it's more like a dark voiced digital mode than a true analogue replication. There are darker repeats, but the way they respond is a little unlike an analogue device, meaning that it's still identifiably a digital delay. However, the change in voicing makes it a lot more useful. Even as defenders of very bright or digital-sounding effects, the crispness of the first mode is somewhat biting. The third mode, reverse, is a truly exciting feature of this pedal. Reverse delays are a good way of moving the repeats out of the way of the initial note, since the reversed envelope necessarily means an enforced pre-delay. That, plus the smoother timbre of the fade-in is why you often see post-rock guitarists using reverse modes when tremolo-picking. Though there are other pedals available at budget price points that offer reverse delay, this is a smart feature for Walrus to have added. No doubt it will result in a lot of recommends on pedal forums, when people inevitably ask the question, "what budget options are available for reverse delay?"

AT A GLANCE

CONTROLS: Time, Feedback, Mix

MODES: Digital, Analog, Reverse

POWER: 9V DC Centre-negative

BYPASS: Buffered bypass

REVERB
Reverberation station

£125

The Fundamental Reverb ships with three settings, hall, spring and plate, and decay, tone and mix controls. On paper this isn't exciting, but the pedal is made more interesting by the fact that the decay slider has a decent range to it. This allows for a range of sounds from subtle to space cadet. As a standalone reverb it is a decent proposition, but more experimental players are likely to pair it with additional pedals like a delay. The tone control means that in the standalone and the stacking case, the pedal never gets too muddy. The Hall algorithm is spacious and airy, great for lead parts, while the spring mode has a satisfying wet twang. However, it's the plate mode that's the most interesting.

Not only is the model they've made decent, but the amount of decay available pushes it into the tonal ballpark of classic rack reverbs. Now, it's obviously not got the same studio grade fidelity as a Lexicon rack reverb, but it's also a fraction of the cost, and housed in a compact enclosure. As is often the case with guitar effects, the audience listening to the part you write using this certainly won't be able to tell the difference by ear. As these pedals only have three controls, there's not a sensible option other than the three they've chosen.

However, in an ideal world, a pre-delay would have been useful, to help create space for the original note, as well as that sense of 'blooming' you get from reverbs with a pre-delay. The problem is that having a tone control is more useful, more of the time, and a mix control is a nailed-on essential.

AT A GLANCE

CONTROLS: Decay, Tone, Mix

MODES: Hall, Spring, Plate

POWER: 9V DC Centre-negative

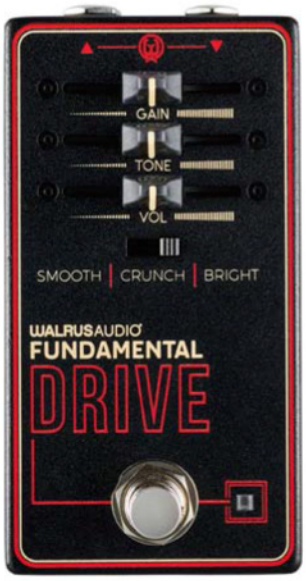
BYPASS: Buffered bypass

ROUND-UP

Are the Fundamentals as brilliant at the basics?

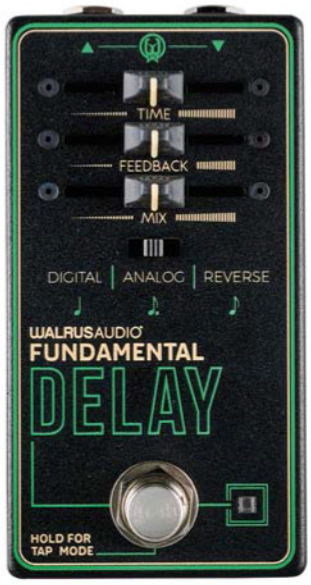
Walrus have focused on covering the basics here – as is presumably intended by the 'Fundamental' moniker. With the essentials covered admirably, we do however feel they could have given over perhaps one special mode per pedal to offer some slightly more radical sounds. It'd be a taste of Walrus' high-end expertise and would encourage sonic experimentation.

Individual pedals in the range stand out more than others. We have a soft spot for the chorus, though it's worth noting that it's one of the pricier options in the range. Overall, with price a factor, the Fundamental Reverb piques our interest the most of the four. Walrus have put out some great ambient reverbs in the last couple of years, and there's a sense that their experience has trickled down here. With three straightforward modes, and with delay and mix ramped up, it becomes a decent ambient reverb. With a tone control for the trails, it's easy to dial in a sound that plays well with your rig and doesn't become too muddy. Elsewhere, the delay might be a little meat-and-potatoes, but it does sport a reverse mode, something many pedals overlook. Finally, the drive perhaps lacks a little of the user-engagement factor of the other pedals (often the case with drive pedals, admittedly), and would benefit from some of the unique squeeze of a Tube Screamer or heft of a RAT.



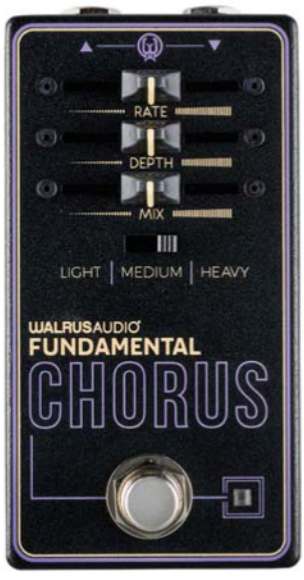
DRIVE

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★½
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★½
USABILITY	★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½



DELAY

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★½
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★½
USABILITY	★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½



CHORUS

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★½
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★½
USABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

REVERB

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★½
USABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

CONTACT: Walrus Audio

WEB: www.walrusaudio.com

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EVH 5150 ICONIC SERIES 15W 1X10 COMBO

EVH expand their Iconic series with this compact yet powerful combo

Eddie Van Halen wasn't just one of the greatest guitarists of all time; his quest for the perfect tone drove him to become an expert tweaker of amps, pedals and guitars, all of which were brought together under the EVH brand, currently curated by Fender. EVH's popular and affordable Iconic series of 5150 amplifiers evolved from the mighty 5150 III head, a go-to powerhouse of tones used by many top metal and rock professionals, and the range has recently been expanded to include this new 1x10 combo.

Designed with assistance from amp guru James Brown, the Iconic 1x10 is a smartly-presented combo available in black or ivory vinyl, with a brushed aluminium control panel that's easy to read in low light. It's a two-channel design with separate gain and master volume controls for clean and lead, expanded with clean/overdrive and lead/burn boost preset switches. There's a shared EQ with global controls for reverb, resonance and presence, these last two working to fine-tune the output stage's response. A clever baffle arrangement inside the cabinet pumps up the bass from the specially-designed 10" EVH/Celestion driver.

The Iconic's two channels produce the full range of EVH sounds, from sparkling cleans and toothsome crunch on the clean channel to the responsive, touch-sensitive dynamics of the lead and burn channel voices. Both channels are a delight to play using single coils or humbuckers, with a ton of low end, balanced mids and sparkling highs giving the impression you're using a much bigger cabinet. The pure class A single-ended 6L6 power stage adds a gentle compression which emphasises the lead channel's vocal quality, with controlled feedback and 'edge of the pick' harmonics appearing just when you want them, almost as if by magic. The Iconic's buffered effect loop is quiet and well-suited to delays and modulation effects, while the speaker-emulated DI output is also noise-free and does a good job of sounding like the 5150 4x12 cab. It's a carefully tuned analogue filter, so you won't run into latency issues, meanwhile microphone enthusiasts can also make use of the useful 1/4 power option for quiet recording or home practice.

> "IT DELIVERS THE 5150 SOUND IN A PORTABLE PACKAGE"

There are smaller and lighter 1x10 combos, although for us the Iconic's superb sounds more than make up for the generous cabinet size. The single-ended class A output stage helps with maintenance costs as there's only one power valve to replace, however because it's continuously conducting 100% current you'll need to replace it more frequently – not a quick job due to the fully-enclosed cabinet.

Overall, though, the new EVH Iconic 1x10 combo is an excellent solution for amateurs and semi-pros, delivering the big sounds of the legendary 5150 in a relatively portable and affordable package.

Nick Guppy

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★½
USABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

1 RESONANCE AND PRESENCE CONTROLS
Global resonance and presence controls help to fine-tune the 5150's low and high frequency response. The resonance control is key to dialling the amp in.

2 GAIN CONTROLS
Both channels have independent boost functions. The channel indicator LED changes colour to let you know its status – red for lead/burn, green for clean/overdrive.

3 DI/ HEADPHONES
The Iconic features this speaker-emulated DI output that also drives headphones. The emulation is analogue so no latency; plug in here to mute power.

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Hybrid valve/solid-state preamp and valve power amp.

OUTPUT: 15 watts RMS

VALVES: 2 x 12AX7, 1 x 6L6

DIMENSIONS: 500mm (w) x 260mm (d) x 470mm (h)

WEIGHT (kg/lb): 17.3/38.2

LOUDSPEAKERS: 1 x 10" Celestion EVH Custom Design

CHANNELS: Two, with clean/overdrive and lead/burn voice selection

CONTROLS: Channel 1 gain, Channel 2 gain, low, mid, high, Channel 1 master volume, Channel 2 master volume, reverb level, resonance, presence. Overdrive, burn and channel select switches

CONTACT: EVH Amplification, www.evhgear.com

Photography Phil Barker

AmpliTube
GRAPHIC
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CAB
ALT
MODEL
SELECT
HOLD > SETUP
PARAMETER
GAIN
BASS
MID
TREBLE
VOLUME
PRESET
BACK
HOLD > SAVE
HOLD > ALT
REVERB
COMPRESSOR
NOISE-GATE
PRESENCE
DEPTH
TONEX
VIR™ Tech
MACHINE MODELING
BANK DOWN
BANK UP
A
B
C

IK MULTIMEDIA TONEX PEDAL £399

Now you can take your TONEX Tone Models to the stage

Faithfully capturing a snapshot digital reproduction of any real amp has for several years been the province of Kemper with their Profiler and, in more recent years, Neural DSP with the Quad Cortex – hardware units both and not cheap. IK Multimedia, however, has chosen the more cost-effective software route for amp capture with TONEX, an application utilising AI machine modelling to create 'Tone Models' which could be various combinations of amp, cab and drive pedal.

Up until recently, you could only utilise the Tone Models via a standalone or DAW plug-in instance of TONEX or integrate them into Amplitube, but now the company is offering a hardware option with the TONEX Pedal, a triple-footswitch stompbox that can hold Tone Models in 150 presets for use onstage without a computer.

You could just buy the pedal and use it as is with the default onboard sounds, but its full potential is achieved by linking up to a computer to access the library of free Tone Models that can simply be dragged and dropped into the Pedal's preset banks. There's no shortage of these as the Pedal comes bundled with the TONEX Max software with 1,000 Tone Models, and there's plenty more available online as all users can post their own captures. Access to the stored presets is easy via the footswitches, and each has a load of hands-on tweakability available from the front panel – including basic amp-style controls but also a compressor, a noise gate and reverb in the signal chain.

> "THIS IS A GAME-CHANGER CONSIDERING ITS PRICE"

There's a great range of quality sounds here from the outset, but if you have your own amps and want to clone their sound for use onstage or elsewhere so you can leave them at home then it's time to use the software to capture some tones. You'll need some sort of re-amping box or one of IK's other hardware items like the TONEX Capture, but the process is relatively straightforward, and it will give you a very accurate reproduction of your chosen rig. Five configurations are possible – Amp and Cab, Complex Rig (stomp, amp and cab), Stomp, Amp, and Stomp & Amp.

Considering its price compared to other hardware capture options, the TONEX Pedal is a definite game-changer. For anyone who wants an affordable, accurate sonic representation of their own rig to take to gigs it's a no-brainer, and for anyone who's content to use the available Tone Models it's a very practical asset with a variety of uses including as an amp/cab rig for practice, recording or live into a PA or maybe, with cab sim turned off, as an array of different drive pedals for your pedalboard.

Trevor Curwen

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★★
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★½
USABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

1 FOOTSWITCHES The footswitches give you easy access to presets onstage – three instantly available in a bank, with bank changes facilitated by pressing two footswitches simultaneously.

2 REAR PANEL Besides USB for librarian or audio interface duties, there's external control via MIDI and/or plugging in an expression pedal or single or double footswitch.

3 ROW OF SIX KNOBS Instantly tweakable Gain, Volume, Bass, Middle and Treble, but if you press and hold the Parameter knob you get secondary functions for those five knobs.

AT A GLANCE

FEATURES: 150 presets, MIDI control, audio interface capability, comes with Amplitube 5 and Tonex MAX software

CONTROLS: Model, Preset, Parameter, Gain, Bass, Mid, Treble, Volume, Footswitch A, footswitch B, footswitch C

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard outputs L(Mono) & R, standard headphones output, MIDI IN, MIDI OUT, Ext. Control, USB

POWER: Supplied 9V DC adaptor

DIMENSIONS: 175 (w) x 145 (d) x 57 mm (h)

Photography Olly Curtis

12V DC
BALANCED OUT
MIDI OUT
MIDI IN
OUT
RETURN
SEND
GUITAR IN
BASS
TREBLE
GAIN
VOLUME
BOOST
BASS
MID
TREBLE
GAIN
VOLUME
VOLUME
AMERICAN CLEAN
BRITISH CRUNCH
MODERN LEAD
PRESS ACTIVE CHANNEL TO TOGGLE BOOST
ReVolt Guitar
ANALOG AMP SIM
BYPASS
Two notes
AUDIO ENGINEERING
CLEAN
CRUNCH
LEAD

1 ANALOGUE SIGNAL PATH
Yes, there's MIDI control, but the signal is 100 per cent analogue, and there's an ECC83 valve inside, too.

2 FLEXIBLE ROUTING
There's plenty of flexibility to send your signal with or without the speaker emulation to an amp, PA, audio interface or headphones.

3 ER... IRS?
Two Notes might be known for its impressive speaker impulse responses, but the emulation on the ReVolt is analogue, too. Owners get lifetime access to a collection of software-powered DynIRs for free for use when running into a computer.

TWO NOTES REVOLT GUITAR £349

The master of speaker emulation turns its hand to analogue amp sim pedals

The amp market right now is more diverse than ever. From traditional combos and heads to profiling and modelling, we've now entered the 'pedalboard era' when it comes to plugging in: floor-based preamp and amp solutions that negate the need to carry a head altogether. However, that's where things become less clear. Some pedal-amps are equipped with power stages and can serve as the backbone to your entire rig. Others offer a choice of regular outputs for sending to a power amp or active cabinet, emulated outputs for going direct to a PA or audio interface for recording. And some have the job lot.

So, what's Two Notes' ReVolt Guitar? Well, the brand calls it an 'Analog Amp Sim'. That's nothing new – ask your uncle about his SansAmp – but essentially, it's a three-channel-plus-boost, valve-equipped preamp that acts as your front end.

It's equipped with an ECC83 preamp valve running at high voltage, and on the back there's an effects loop, MIDI (via 3.5mm jacks) plus a balanced XLR output. On the front, there's more connectivity thanks to an aux-in and headphone socket, plus switching options for using the ReVolt in a four-cable configuration and the on-board cab sim. Here, we get analogue speaker emulation based on a Marshall Slash Jubilee 4x12" cab, and Two Notes has provided access to its impressive DynIRs digitally with a lifetime license for Torpedo Wall Of Sound.

> "REVOLT CAN BE MANY THINGS IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS"

Tone-wise, we have a Fender-aping American Clean, Marshall approximation British Crunch and higher-gain Modern Lead channel based on a Soldano SLO 100. The Crunch nails those woody Hendrix semi-cleans and with more gain and a push to the mids we're in classic rock territory. The Modern Lead channel is perhaps the most satisfying, even if you're not after out-and-out filth. The overdrive is thick, rich with harmonics and has plenty of gain. The boost is applicable to each channel by pressing the channel switch a second time, with its level governed by the white Boost control – and it's as simple to use as that!

So the name of the game is flexibility and routing. ReVolt can be many things in different situations, from an amp-expanding three-channel pedal, recording front end, practice tool, or a link between pedalboard and speakers. It's a shame there's no way to load IRs into the ReVolt for recall on stage. Likewise, if you want to run it into the software, you'll need an audio interface.

If you're looking for a complete solution for every scenario, this isn't quite it. However, if you're tired of getting bogged down, the ReVolt delivers the stuff you need most without the things you don't.

Stuart Williams

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Analogue amp simulator

VALVES: 1X ECC83

CHANNELS: Clean, Crunch, Modern Lead

SOCKETS: Input, output, FX send/return, balanced output MIDI I/O, aux-in, headphones

CONTROLS: Gain/volume per-channel, two-band EQ (Clean channel) three-band EQ (Crunch/Modern Lead channel), Boost level, four-cable switch, cab sim switch

CONTACT: Two Notes Audio Engineering, www.two-notes.com

Photography Olly Curtis

APOGEE JAM X £199

A solid mobile interface with built-in compression and bite

Apogee's Jam interfaces have been around since 2010, and are great mobile recording interfaces for Mac, PC and iOS devices. The current Jam+ features an Overdrive mode to partner with amp emulators. The all-new Jam X replaces this with an analogue compressor but has a similar spec otherwise. Plug hi-Z instruments like guitar, bass and keys into the 1/4" input and hear the results through your computer or the 1/8-inch output driving headphones or powered speakers.

Connecting up Jam X is a breeze, although non-USB-C iOS devices will require an additional Lightning cable. PC computer owners must download a driver but otherwise, it's easy to get up and running. The main dial controls the input from your guitar/instrument, although with no numbers to indicate the level and only three (very bright) LED meters, it's a bit hit-and-miss. While the manual helpfully suggests your ideal level is when the third LED starts going orange, you might use your DAW's input meter to set levels instead.

The recording resolution is up to 24-bit/96kHz, so you are guaranteed a clean recording if that's what you want. We say that because the built-in compressor – Jam X's USP – adds three modes of compression that can transform your sound. The compression is brought in using the main dial, this time pressing it to step through three settings. The first, Smooth Leveler, is gentle and ideal for evening out erratic input levels. Purple Squeeze is described as medium compression and we found it adds decent grit and punch. Finally, Vintage Blue Stomp adds the most drama, driving the signal hard and delivering a fair bit of distortion. If you prefer no compression, hitting the button again removes it completely.

A useful Blend option (via the button above the main dial) switches in direct monitoring so you hear your input signal before it's processed through your computer, thus cutting down latency – perfect for recording in time (although our Mac/Logic setup had very little latency to start with).

Jam X is a fantastic, compact and well-built interface that enhances the range's portable and sonic credentials. Like the Plus, we love the added extra, this time with the attitude the compressor brings. If you are an iOS user you'll find it an especially useful and portable guitar recording solution, and overall it's a golden nugget of an interface.

Andy Jones

SUMMARY

FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★½
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★½
USABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

AT A GLANCE

USB C AUDIO INTERFACE: Built-in compressor with three settings (Smooth Leveler, Purple Squeeze, Vintage Blue Stomp)

PUREDIGITAL: Signal flow with up to 24-bit/96kHz recording; 1/8-inch output for headphones and powered speaker; 1/4-inch input for hi-Z instruments (so works with guitar, bass, keyboards, synths, or acoustic instruments with pickups)

BLEND: Control to reduce recording latency; solid metal construction

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Words Ellie Rogers Photo Jeff Pitcher

TALLULAH SIM-SAVAGE HOTWAX

Led by guitarist/vocalist Tallulah Sim-Savage, HotWax are tipped as one of the UK's most exciting new bands. After a string of self-released singles and incendiary live shows, the trio recently landed a deal with Marathon Artists to unleash their debut EP, *A Thousand Times*.

The earliest compositions on the angsty five-track were penned when Tallulah was just 15 years old, yet they effervesce with the immediacy of a freshly-caught brainwave. "We tried not to overthink things or be ridiculously perfect with everything we recorded," explains the now-18-year-old musician.

Born and raised in the small but vibrant artistic community of Hastings, Tallulah's journey towards becoming a swaggering punk rock frontwoman with fierce fretboard skills to match has a touch of destiny about it. Her musical life began at eight years old, when – a country music fan in those days – she'd strum acoustic tunes in her bedroom. She credits a surprise gift from her mother as being "the thing that changed everything." That gift was Hole's *Live Through This* album.

A concoction of other "nineties influences", Blondie and "watching female heavy musicians" fuelled the young player's fascination with guitar-based catharsis, and she overcame shyness to pursue her rock 'n' roll dream. Nowadays, she struts about the stage with the veteran confidence of her heroines and will always be seen with her Fender Jaguar, which she's modified with a Bigsby and two P90s in place of the "fizzy" stock humbuckers for a striking look and sound.

Tallulah's go-to pedal, and the inspiration for the band's name, is the Electro-Harmonix Hot Wax Dual Overdrive, which she combines with a pair of Fulltone OCDs. Why two? Well, there's one "on the high-peak setting for the chorus bits" and another "on the low-peak setting for middle heaviness."

On the EP, you'll also hear the soul-shaking force of a Keeley Fuzz Bender and an Electro-Harmonix POG for adventures into multiple octaves. Tallulahs's instinct for crafting a unique sonic thumbprint also extends to the amp department where she chooses a Fender Excelsior – a now-discontinued, compact and modestly appointed tube amp that's often actually favoured by harmonica players. "It just has a dark and light switch, and a volume," she shrugs. "I love valve amps and I love the simplicity."

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